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HAERING'S THE ETHICS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



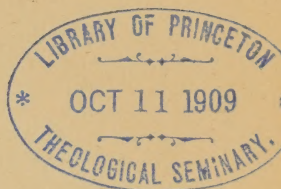


# THE ETHICS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

BY

✓  
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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

BOOKS on ethics abound, but scarcely books on Christian ethics. When the qualifying word is added the supply is not so great. It is commonly thought that ethics is a science that may be examined and treated like any other science, apart from all presuppositions that transcend the present life. Psychology may pursue its way untrammelled by the hypothesis of a soul. It seeks to explore mind by careful observation of mental processes and physical experiments and inductive reasoning, and to reduce the region of spiritual mystery to an exact science. Cannot ethics proceed in an analogous way? Whether this may be so or not, certain it is that there is no accepted theory of ethics. Ethics is based in metaphysics, and the metaphysical basis will determine the character of the theory. This is shown in the first part of the present work, and English students who desire more information and instruction will find it in such works as the *Methods of Ethics* of the late Professor Sidgwick, the *Types of Ethical Theory* of the eloquent James Martineau. Mill's utilitarianism will represent the hedonistic or eudæmonistic point of view, while the evolutionist's theories are treated in Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, Stephen's *Science and Ethics*, and Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*. Bradley's *Ethical Studies* represent Hegelianism as conceived by him in an English dress. There are many useful works of an introductory kind which may be recommended, as Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics*, clearly written and useful, and Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics*, with Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*.

In all such works, and many others easy to mention, old and recent, the practical part is usually limited in range, if treated at all. Dr Haering's work differs from all such treatises in that

it professes to be distinctively a work on Christian practice. It assumes, as every Christian must, the existence of God, and the unique character of Christ and the Christian religion. If Christianity is a unique religion, and has its system of morality, then the investigation of this system cannot but be a work of both theoretical and practical importance.

Of especial importance must such a treatise be to the clergyman and Christian minister. It is not possible for him to fulfil either his pastoral or preaching functions without dealing with ethical problems. To do this effectively he must do it on system. On what system? There are large numbers of those who hold the clerical office who have no acquaintance, or but a limited acquaintance, with psychology, so needful for every teacher. The subject is one more or less compulsory on the secular teacher, and (one would suppose) needful for the spiritual guide. Much more necessary is it to possess a coherent knowledge of ethics. Psychology may show us how to teach; ethics, what to teach.

It is true that the subjects with which the Christian minister has to deal soar above the moral into the spiritual atmosphere, and that, as commonly conceived, there are doctrines of pure revelation on which he must dwell; but it is also true that the preacher, especially the 'practical' preacher, can scarcely select a text in which there is not some moral duty that needs to be enforced. In the ordinary course of his studies and pastoral practice it will go hard if he has not to think out the bearings of duty and thus slowly accumulate useful ethical knowledge. But such knowledge is apt to be miscellaneous, incoherent, guided by no principle, and lame accordingly; or it is made up of scraps which, when duly traced home, belong to different and inconsistent systems, an incongruous mixture of Paley and Butler and others. For all such students a systematised treatise like the present will prove invaluable; if not one with which it is possible always to agree, yet one that will guide and stimulate, and help to systematise thought.

The author is a Protestant of the 'Evangelical Church' of Germany, a State Church, under those peculiar conditions which it is not easy for the English Churchman to understand.



Roughly speaking, it is as if in England some of the communions outside the Church of England were 'levelled up' into 'Establishment' and State recognition. The numerous *Kirchen-rechtlichen Abhandlungen* show the complicity and variety of the conditions arising. From this it follows that the author may be expected to deal with his subject from the strictest Protestant point of view, and also, as he does towards the end, touch on questions that are not of immediate interest to the English Churchman. It may not thus be possible always to agree with the author's statements or feel deep interest in his particular problems, save as they serve to show how, under varied conditions of Church life, ethical problems are constantly arising everywhere and need the proper ethical equipment for dealing with them. The whole work, therefore, is interesting to the English reader, and the translator has done his best to present it in as fair a form as a style occasionally difficult to follow admits.

JAMES S. HILL.

STOWEY RECTORY,  
*August 1908.*



## INTRODUCTION.

As *The Ethics of the Christian Life* is the first volume of Professor Haering's which has appeared before the English-speaking public in a translation, it may be of interest to introduce it with a few words as to the personality of its author. Dr Haering was born in Stuttgart in 1848, and after completing his academic education at the Universities of Tübingen and Berlin, he returned to Tübingen for a short time, but soon afterwards entered upon parochial work at Calw and Stuttgart. In 1886 he was called to the Chair of Theology at Zürich, where he succeeded Biedermann, one of Hegel's most eminent disciples. In 1889 Dr Haering left Switzerland for Göttingen, taking the Chair left vacant by the death of Ritschl. Here he remained till 1895, when he returned to Tübingen. Like most of the younger school of German theologians, Professor Haering has felt the influence of Ritschl, and has adopted many of his theological methods, even when arriving at conclusions of his own. His principal works are the present volume and a volume which he published two years ago on the Christian Faith. In both of these works he has the same object in view—to interpret the Gospel in the language of the age and according to the needs of the age.

W. D. M.





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# The Ethics of the Christian Life

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE term 'Moral' Philosophy is a translation of a Latin word, and this in turn of a Greek word which properly means the science of habits. The word is, however, now usually taken to mean the science of morals, *i.e.* a body of doctrine not on the way in which men are actually accustomed to act, but what it is they *ought* to do and how they *ought* to act. Ethics therefore defines the nature, meaning, and laws of this important part of human life, that is, of morals, and critically compares the various ideals.

In what then do the nature, meaning, and laws of Christian Ethics consist? How ought we to regulate our lives as Christians? It would be strange to speak of the seriousness of the question. It concerns all. It concerns youth, acutely aware of life, and living as though it had a thousand existences—happy is he who early recognises its purpose! It is for him who is near its goal, while he who is at life's zenith can only make a right use of it who clearly realises what it is intended for. And as the seriousness of the question is clear it would be strange to dwell longer on its difficulty. For although Christians do not doubt that they ought to order their lives according to the will of God as revealed in Christ, yet in the New Testament they are often exhorted to prove what that will is; which they can only learn in many a circuitous way. And why has the doing of the will of God such significance at

all? Why, alongside the question, What must we believe? is there that other, What ought we to do?—alongside the Christian Faith the Christian Life?

Especially serious and difficult for our day is the question as to the Christian life. Everything is in a state of flux; nothing seems to stand firm, even among those who desire to take the Gospel in earnest. For instance, they judge very variously as to the relation of the Christian to the world. Ancient as the subject is in itself, these varying judgments are connected with the fact that old problems present themselves to us in wholly new shapes, complicacy and urgency, and demand their solution on the basis of Christian ideas. How does the Christian stand in regard to the industrial battle? How to a law which touches the boundary of art? How to the trial of a cleric on a question of mere doctrine? Must or can all those points remain unsettled because every one has enough to do to save his own soul? Surely, if it is only a matter of diversity of opinion in respect of a truth which in its kernel is not controverted. Now the question, How are we to order our life? is by no means answered only in the Christian sense. There are foes all around us. One class of opponents will indeed for the most part allow that to be considered good or evil which Christians regard as such; but it must be set free from any belief in God. Now, can that be the same thing? Others suppose they can give us an ethic better suited in moral content to the needs of actual life than that of an obsolete Christianity with its law of love. Lastly, the opinions are increasing in number of those who deny any distinction whatever between good and evil; or, more precisely, of those who call evil that which has hitherto been regarded as good, and call that good which has so far passed as evil. Consequently the battle is not merely concerning the Christian faith on which rests the Christian life, but about the regulation of the life on Christian principles; and the historical epoch in which we live has grown in many respects similar to that in which the ancient world was in conflict with the purer life of the early Christian Church, and the Church brought forward the silencing argument of fact. Facts can only render modest services in this

argument; nevertheless, they are not contemptible. The argument further must have close regard to the special situation which has just been pointed out. We may not present Christian Ethics as if no other system were in existence.

This problem is not an isolated one, but to a considerable degree touches the question as to the relation between philosophical and theological ethics. It is therefore a matter of prime consequence for the friends of the latter to remember that it damages its own cause if it allows the fruits of philosophical investigation to remain unused; as, *e.g.*, what human reflection has worked out on the basal relations of ethics in regard to Rule, Motive, Purpose of moral action. Theological Ethics does thereby damage its own clearness as well as its capability of being intelligible to others. The same thing is true if it decline to carefully examine the varied conceptions with regard to its fundamental concepts presented by history, or will not penetrate into the rich history of moral ideals. It is only in this way that Christian Ethics can comprehend its own ideal. Only, in both these investigations it must be on its guard against unwittingly appropriating or giving recognition to ideas at variance with those grown on Gospel soil. In particular, its advocates must not allow themselves to be swayed by the prejudice of their opponents that philosophical knowledge stands on a surer foundation than theirs because drawn from reason only. As if it must not be decided what then, closely taken, reason is, and what intrinsic right it has to decide the question: What is the Good? Thus from this point Christian Ethics sees itself referred to the need of critical comparison and contrast with non-Christian systems. In the absence of this the best treatment will find no firm basis.

Therefore, in what follows we distinguish, as in architecture, between a plan and its elaboration. Or, in other words, even Christian Ethics stands in need of some defence (Apologetics) against its foes; mindful, of course, that the best defence is a victorious attack. Such defence is naturally only possible if the nature of the subject to be defended is accurately known. Now, Doctrine (Dogmatics) and Morals (Ethics) are the two main constituents of Christian teaching. On external grounds of



convenience they are separately treated, but they form one whole. Doctrine shows us how the kingdom of God becomes to us an assured personal possession, as God's gift by faith in Christ; Ethics how this faith is our incentive and motive power to co-operation in the task, implicate in the gift, of realising the 'kingdom of God' more and more for ourselves, so that it may 'come' here in time and there in eternity. Or, Doctrine shows us how our assured faith of salvation and divine adoption into the kingdom of God is the work of God's love: Ethics how this assured faith of salvation manifests its activity in love to God and our neighbours. Thus Ethics rests entirely on Dogmatics, and yet the latter is not complete in the former precisely because the great gift of God has the special peculiarity of shaping itself into a task. This must be more fully entered into later. Here we only point out that Faith and Love form an indissoluble unity, and it is as a whole that it must be brought into comparison and contrast with every opposing system of Faith and Practice. For this battle Dogmatics and Ethics, in which the Christian system is brought out in all its aspects, give us the right weapon. The victory of the Christian system must be grounded on its intrinsic superiority. But for our purpose Apologetics must in inverse order be the foundation of Dogmatics and Ethics, for it is only by comparison with opposing systems that we can become acquainted with that superiority which is grounded in its nature. And if, as here is the case, Ethics is separately treated, it is still impossible to dispense with the Apologetic foundation. If this Apologetic basis were treated independently as common to Dogmatics and Ethics, and prefaced to both, then Ethics would immediately follow Dogmatics; the conclusion of Dogmatics would be the certainty of salvation by faith, and this certainty the beginning of Ethics; while that which is usually treated as a final section of Dogmatics, Eschatology, would form the conclusion of a complete presentation of the Christian Faith and the Christian Life.

## Part I

### Christian Ethics and its Opponents

THIS part falls into three sections. The first is on the indispensable fundamental concepts of Ethics generally. The second is on the most important opponents of Christian Ethics. The third is on the truth of Christian Ethics in contrast with opposing systems. On the order of single portions of the exposition different opinions may be held. For instance, the positions of our opponents would be plainer if both the nature of the Christian Good, and the common or related attitude in regard to Conscience and Freedom, could have been earlier explained. But then other greater inconveniences, and especially unprofitable repetitions, would arise.



CHAPTER I.  
FUNDAMENTAL ETHICAL CONCEPTS.  
OF ACTION.

WHAT do the terms 'moral,' 'the good,' mean? In such a proverbial expression as 'Conscience is the chamber of justice' a truth is proclaimed whose value cannot be overestimated, that in actual life there is a common agreement widely prevalent as to what we ought to do, and that the question rather is as to our will to do it. But not only has that common agreement its limits in the wide world and in the individual heart, as we are constrained to confess at the outset; but also the very fact that we frequently do not will what we ought compels us to inquire what is the nature of this remarkable 'ought' with which the will is by no means always at one. In this, magniloquent sentences and formal definitions do not help us. It may, amongst other things, be quite correct to say that morality consists in the submission of our personal life to absolute law. But how much is there in such a proposition which in turn needs explanation? As good as all of it: Law, and Absolute and Personal. Will all give the like explanation of such terms and all agree to the whole proposition? Examination, too, as to the usage in ethics of the main concepts 'good' and 'bad' does not help us much, exciting in our minds as the words do so many sensuous ideas; as, *e.g.*, we speak of 'good' food and a 'good' conscience, a 'bad' finger and a 'bad' action. It is thought that more will be gained by comparing moral action with the other activities of the human soul; what we call 'good' with that which is named 'true,' 'beautiful,' 'just.' But how-

ever simple that may seem, still every one understands the same words in a different sense, and the confusion only grows greater. If, then, in such simple explanations there is much that is indefinite, we may yet say to ourselves: This is only a search for a path in the world of ethics; it will of itself only disclose its wealth when we have found a way of access for our reflection. It is a presupposition grounded in the nature of the case that our reflection must, as hitherto has been regarded as self-evident, start with the inner life of the individual. Certainly every system of ethics remains incomplete which does not somehow shape itself into social ethics; but it is true that that which merely begins at this point is obscure, provided the clearness of every science depends on its commencing with a subject of examination such as first presents itself and is intelligible.

The word 'action' is of prime importance in the science of ethics. Thus we may ask: What is the nature of 'moral action'? For no one really denies that it is concerned with action. We all are so far under the influence of the Gospel that we cannot simply confound doing and knowing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." It is possible to be very wise and very learned and yet be a bad man. Good and bad do not in the first line depend on knowledge (important as this must be in and for itself as well as for action), but on 'feeling' and 'will.' Knowledge is the more complete the more closely it apprehends its object, quite independently of the significance which it has for us, for our weal or woe. But feeling and will have to do with us more intimately, and with that which is for us of value. But what sort of value is moral value? And still more do good and bad depend on the will than on the emotions, however certain it is that feeling and will cannot be separated. 'You did not will' to do it is an expression which belongs to ethics; while enthusiasm for the beautiful, or a want of appreciation of it, is a matter of passive feeling and imaginative power. To will what is good is naturally expected of all, but not, or not with like insistence, that all should appreciate the beautiful. *Æsthetics* is not on the same level with ethics.

Meanwhile we may hope that the nature of moral action will become somewhat clearer to us if we call to mind what we



understand by 'action' in general. Action clearly is a kind of activity. Even the forces of nature work; the most violent changes are wrought by them. But they do not 'act.' Nay, it is only with reserve that we allow the use of the word to animals. To this notion there belongs conscious self-determination, reason, choice, in distinction from mere desire. If now we emphasise in the definition 'working with conscious self-determination, with rational will,' the terms 'conscious,' 'rational,' a threefold question lies therein: Whereto? How? Why? or, in other words, such 'working' sets before itself a goal; would realise a purpose, in a definitive way and manner, according to a rule (Norm) and from a definite spring of action (Motive). If we emphasise in these words: 'working with conscious self-determination, with rational will' the term self-determination ('will' or 'choice'), the question at once arises, What does that import? And we at once stumble on the mystery which will accompany us through the whole of ethics, in the depths of which our thoughts might overwhelm us, were it not a matter much more close to our consciousness than to our cognition; this mystery of our self-activity, our self-determination, of the power which we know as our innermost self, the kernel of our ego. All this is, of course, no great advance in our knowledge. But it is, so to speak, concerned only with raw material. He who regards this as a trifling matter at the commencement will have later on cause to repent his neglect. In these simple reflections which have busied us, those fundamental concepts have their origin which have always been important in ethics: Good, Duty, Virtue. They correspond to the three words, End, Rule, Motive. And here, in reference to these three, the following propositions, still of course only in shadowy outline, may find mention: Moral Good is the moral End considered as realised. The moral rule impelling the single act of will to the realisation of this end is called duty; the moral motive considered as an acquired power of the acting will is called virtue. The idea 'Thou oughtest,' which turns on our decision, the idea, *i.e.*, of responsibility and freedom, gains its clearness from the fact that we give heed to that speciality of the will (its power of decision), and allow it full play.

The plainer it becomes in this way what action is, the more urgent grows the question: What is moral action?

### MORAL ACTION.

#### *The 'Value' of Moral Action.*

In order to get a clear answer we may in the quiet of our own reflection employ a simple expedient. We ask ourselves what is all that which men have called 'good' and 'evil' since those words were used? and how various are the things which are so called even to-day? And yet, in spite of all this variety, what is meant at the bottom by the judgment, it is 'good' or 'bad,' and at the moment we utter it? *E.g.* to care for our own family, to provide for one's household, as the Scriptures say, is most certainly moral action. Of course, understood in an infinite variety of ways, if we realise to ourselves the long history from the simplest family relationships to our own more complicated ones. Infinitely diverse too, if we think of the way and manner, the rules by which this care has been exercised, and of the motives which have impelled thereto. Was not war once regarded as a legitimate method? Even amongst ourselves does not judgment fluctuate as to what is proper in business profits? Just as various if we look at the motives. We may care for our own for honour's sake, but also from self-sacrificing affection, with complete self-denial; and, indeed, just as well because we know nothing higher than their relationship to us, as because we consider them as belonging to the kingdom of God. Involuntarily are we compelled to apply the above-mentioned ethical master ideas—End, Rule, Motive. And above all, that other point of view thrusts itself forward: In what sense is such action an affair of the will? not merely of determination and steadfastness, but also of responsibility and freedom? But if this action, however indefinite it seems, has been and is regarded as moral, so there has been and is always the feeling present that it has a unique value. Without perception of value there is no action at all; the 'end' is somehow a 'Good.' It passes for 'Moral,' however—whether rightly or wrongly is not now in question—because an especial value is ascribed to it. More precisely:

As we can only speak of the value of an action in relation to the doer of it, we mean that which, while in regard to his feeling it is intelligible, is at the same time something transcendent and absolute. What this feeling is can only be known through personal submission and obedience by means of which the agent first realises what that real value is. A unique dignity, a lofty incomparable majesty, clings to the question: What is the 'Good'? And looking closer, we must repeat what is said above—this dignity attaches to all the relations of this question, to all aspects of moral action, to 'End,' 'Rule,' 'Motive,' as to the marvellous depth of the expression 'I ought,' of the feeling, *i.e.*, of obligation which lies in it. Nor is it needless to insist once more on the truth that the distinction between ethics and æsthetics lies in the fact that the former is a question of the will. The two are, however, related in so far as they each postulate a value transcendent and absolute, while the latter makes its appeal to passive feeling and not to the will.

Of course, by these assertions we are led into the midst of the debate about ethical postulates. When, for instance, we speak of value-feelings in treating of the nature of moral habits, we find ourselves in lively conflict with those who consider that we are sacrificing the uniqueness of the moral postulate; while, on the other hand, there are those who emphasise this point of the feeling of value, because by co-ordinating moral action with other actions which arise from desire—though it stands in the highest category—they are able to understand it better. Still, so much must be at once said: neither of these positions takes sufficiently careful note of the immediately given facts of consciousness—whatever may be the ultimate decision as to their reality. This is only done when we have deducted nothing from the proposition above enunciated, that no action without perception of the value of the action can be thought of at all. Even the greatest opponent of the idea that somehow moral action is grounded in the realisation of a valuable end, because, as he thinks, it thus sullies itself with the "serpent-trail of the struggle for happiness" (Kant), is compelled to describe the feeling of respect for moral law—which he (Kant) regards

as the sole ground of moral action—in such a way that the excluded value-perception is imperceptibly reinstated. And, moreover, that subjection under merely formal law (which is alone recognised by him) is not entirely devoid of moral content, and consequently unfruitful for actual life, simply because a definite end—such as the realisation of self, or the social life of men in righteousness and love, or whatever other ideal may be set up—dominates the consciousness of the agent. If we think this away, then we are unable to understand why that magisterial motto: “Act so that the principle of thy action may be a principle of action to all others” cannot be used in the sense of a sheer Egoism. This rule contains the demand to act aright only if a rightly ordered community is presupposed to be the highest end of our action. But we may now really on good ground reject Kant’s scruple, that by recognition of that feeling of pleasure (which is bound up with the moral demand) and of valuable ‘End,’ moral action is hereby tarnished; but we must not therefore grant to his opponents the right to finally confound moral with eudæmonic action. For not only are the value-feelings themselves of various value, which the advocates of eudæmonic ethics allow, and name moral only certain definite value-feelings—what they are we will presently examine; but it is also a mistake to place, without further inquiry, our perceptive value-feelings in the same category with those value-feelings which are purely subjective in their nature. In particular, it is still an open question whether it is not the case that the existence of such higher and exalted value-feelings can only be affirmed on the ground of actual experience, or whether they are not really the immediate delivery of consciousness—the validity of which must later on be treated more fully. This much we unhesitatingly and emphatically affirm without any reserve: If the ethics of the categorical imperative and teleological ethics—as the points at issue may be formulated—were in irreconcilable opposition, we should decide in favour of the former, and be forced to find the true nature of morality merely in the harmony of the will with prescribed duty (*i.e.* absolute law). But the net result of our explanation is that no such alternative ‘either,’ ‘or,’ is



found in the actual experience of the moral life; and that there are no discoverable reasons which compel us to assert its existence. In all essential points the close examination of the simplest formula of common speech: 'Thou shalt do this'—any definite thing—will lead to an unabridged knowledge of the subject-matter.

*Content of Moral Action.*

And now we are already in a position to define more closely what is meant by the proposition: 'A feeling of absolute value' which it is the work of the will to realise. First of all we may again think of 'ends,' 'motives,' and 'rules' of moral action, and fix our attention more closely on the 'ends' from which rules and motives can be deduced, so far as they belong to this and not to the other fundamental point of view summed up in the phrase 'Thou shalt.' It is just as impossible to say that all men naturally strive after the same moral ends as that all regard their moral content as equally good. That God has written in the hearts of all men, as men, His perfect will in unmistakable impress—for a proof of which appeal is often made to the witness of St Paul (Rom. ii. 14-16)—is by many, strangely enough, always regarded as the Christian view. In reply to this misapprehension, it is sufficient to point to the pains the Apostle takes to exhort Christians to "prove what the will of the Lord is"; still more, how impressively he emphasises the truth that the perfect image of God has been first exhibited in Christ, "the second man." Nay, his entire missionary activity—just as in all such activity, in the past and at the present time—is the best answer to that exaggeration. As certainly as our missionaries are not deceived in their confidence that in the most degraded nations they will find something in the human heart which responds to their message of the royal law of love, so sure is it that there exist alongside this prejudices, errors, perversions of all sorts, so that the greatest moral horrors (as we judge them) pass in the judgment of the heathen for actions that are praiseworthy. The opinion that the imperative 'Thou shalt' as an implicate of the mere possession of reason—if this categorical imperative be brought into clear cognition—



suffices to tell us what is good and evil, in spite of the actually varying moral imperatives of individual nations, has been proved to be untenable. We have already seen what justifiable purpose lies at the basis of this opinion of Kant's, but that it endeavours to deduce too much from 'Thou shalt,' and that he puts into it this content in order to fetch it out again.

The proposition that all men are by nature at one in their judgment of what is good and evil—which is a heritage handed over from the Stoic philosophy to Christianity—has been slowly destroyed by conflict with irrefragable facts. The conflict has not been destructive merely, though it often seemed like it. Many wage this argumentative warfare with passion as if those firmest principles of all human morality, which have endured unimpugned through long centuries, were at stake and about to be overthrown. Many rest in the assertion, "How often has that at one time appeared good which at another time and to another people has seemed evil!" But is there really nothing at all which has some common element? Are there not at least common tendencies of the moral sense, common lines of direction of the moral judgment? We may name two in particular.

*First:* That action anyhow passes for good which is not simply an assertion of self-will, or a search for personal happiness, but is, in contradistinction to this, a subordination of our personal will, and an effort to secure another's good. Altruism is often spoken of as an antithesis to Egoism, by which is meant not the benefit of the personal 'I,' but another's good. Only let us realise the incalculable variety of the forms and gradations in which such regard for another may appear. It is a far cry to Christian love of our neighbour; and yet in many of these poor signs do we recognise something of the character of that which in its completeness is Christian love. Among the lowest races, in a sea of selfishness—yet how often is there a drop of self-denying sacrifice glistening like a pearl! And there are broader streams of benevolence, sacrifice, self-denial among highly-developed nations, such as Roman uprightness, German love of fatherland, Buddhist pity; many efforts, too, of the

present time, which do not recognise the fount of love from which the Christian draws.

*Secondly* : Every sort of mastery of a merely natural impulse by feelings of personal self-regard, by self-respect and dignity, in short by culture, passes for 'good.' Of course, all these expressions are taken from the higher stages, but in their final meaning they are applicable to the lowest. The African despot given up to licentious sensuality who conquers his agony in the presence of a foe is a witness for this, and not merely the sage who in India and Greece excites our admiration by his freedom from the desire and passion of the passing moment. How much these two primal relations of morals stand in the foreground, how much they are connected with the sense of absolute worth, is shown by that use of language in which the word 'moral' describes mastery of a sensual impulse and particularly of that which is extremely difficult to control, the sexual impulse; and again *par excellence* is used of our behaviour to our fellow-men. This indicates the truth that he only can assume the right relation to another who has found his right attitude to himself, and *vice versa*. And also we may here remember that the two great root-stems of all moral action, individual and social, have their origin in this double relation, and so it would be false to disjoin them. In reality it is the union of them which will bring us ever deeper into the nature of moral habitudes.

Two other fundamental characteristics are not so simple as these to explain, namely, our lordship over external nature, and reverence for and trust in a supreme power, God. The remark must for the present suffice that it is self-evident that a relation to God is only considered to belong to the sphere of ethics by those who regard religion as something entitled to take front rank in a Christian system. For such persons, faith, trust in God, is the real 'Good.' It is from faith that there issues love to our neighbours and self-conquest. But as to the other point, rule over external nature, it is at least even now sufficiently plain that it is a result as well as presupposition of our self-conquest, and that it finds its greatest value when used for another's good. But we may not recognise all mastery of nature as intrinsically good; otherwise we should be abolishing the

distinction between ethics and civilisation of which we must soon speak.

Still, that we in some measure know of what sort the actions are (as to content) with which our judgment that they are moral actions is bound up, gives us no exhaustive ideas of what the 'moral' is. We said above (p. 8) that the sense of absolute value belongs to certain actions not only in relation to their content, but also essentially as they are the product of our own self-determination. It is this mystery of the 'I ought' that we must closely attend to. (*Cf. Reischle et alii.*) This is the core of our question as to the special characteristic of the moral life. And it is only in this way that what has been said as to the content of the moral life can be rendered quite clear. Our goodwill towards others, that discipline of our own nature we cannot understand as moral action completely, unless we have first understood that we are to recognise their value in our innermost will. It is easy for Christians to distinguish this 'Thou shalt' as moral law, and so to make it clear that it is comparable with all other laws which we know in the realm of moral action; with those of law and custom as with those of prudence and of natural inclination. The more everyone selects examples from his immediate experience, the clearer the matter becomes.

Let us take some example of self-conquest or of goodwill towards others. So long as we can assign no other reason for our conduct than that 'It is just my way,' and for the opposite 'I do not care to,' so long are we under the law of natural impulse and INCLINATION. Of course, it is scarcely possible to call that action a law which is subject to such fickleness. But however fortuitous it may appear to the observer, for the agent himself it is his nature as somehow determined, the law of his action. To describe this, St Paul uses the illuminative expression "the law in our members." If such a man is under some external restraint, and cannot realise his wishes at the moment, he experiences a discomfort similar to a disturbance of his bodily health. At the same time, let us not forget how nearly such action can, in outward seeming, be related to the 'Good.' It gives undoubtedly indications of a certain good-

ness of disposition and of a natural moderation which rises not a bit higher than the stages described. In virtue of this content a shimmer of goodness radiates it; but will anyone name it 'Good'? We spontaneously place PRUDENCE, which acts by rule, in a higher position; at least, if we think of the effort which it presupposes to reach an end correspondent to our personal inclination and our natural search for happiness. A whole world artistically ordered owes its existence to the wise calculation of utility, and there are many stones in this building which, to the superficial observer, resemble the genuine precious stones out of which the temple of the 'Good' is constructed. There is a business (let us say) famous on account of a stability which has never been shaken. Unexpectedly a crisis arises. It can be obviated, it seems, by a single false report which its proprietor may spread. Yet inherited advantages and acquired experiences unite in enabling him to form the judgment that the probability of maintaining his position by these means is less than the probability of the misfortune. He forbears the lie; all the world praises him; a thousand existences are saved with himself. Which is praised, the prudence or the morality? Of course only his prudence, supposing the world to know why he acted thus and in no other way. And he congratulates himself on his prudence; he has no inner witness that his action is 'good' which makes him happy. On the other hand, if he finds himself mistaken, he is vexed over his false calculation; he has no sense of guilt. But the wealth of life from whose many resources we would fain light upon the single 'value' which we may dare call 'the good' is far from being exhausted. Perhaps the calculating skill of the supposed merchant is at an end, and because he has made utility the highest aim of all his actions he is resolved to try the disingenuous means; but thought of the law, supported by the state, restrains him. He has the fear of punishment. The man whom we are thus regarding at the crisis of a decision may possibly have somehow reached the full conviction that he will not fall away from earthly righteousness. But another motive may be a law to him—the respect for custom, the firmly fixed judgment of society, of the special



circle or of the whole population to which he belongs. Perhaps this is an urgent call, a law often binding with more strength than the law of the state; for how hard it is to bear the disrespect of society! how deadly its ban! how sweet and stimulating, how indispensable for innumerable persons, is their honour! In fact, the boundary line between the law of custom and the law of morality is often imperceptible. And still, although this respect for custom is not the highest of motives, yet the door of morality has now been opened. Inclination, Utility, Law, Custom—important as each one of these things is in its place, and indispensable in the economy of life, nay, valuable as means of training for that which is to be, as steps, *i.e.*, to higher things, all of them pale before the splendour of the moral imperative, ‘Thou shalt’—the moral law.

What is its characteristic? It asks no longer *If?* and *Whether?* It derives its validity from no external source, but it demands absolutely (Kant’s categorical imperative). To this speciality of its requirement corresponds the effect which our submission to absolute law or our resistance to it has in our innermost self: it is something quite unique. Resistance to absolute law is not punished by the natural displeasure which desire denied awakens, nor by the feeling of disgust that we have acted so stupidly, nor by the fear of punishment, nor by the censure of society, but by the feeling of guilt—the severest of all. I have lost my true worth, and I am compelled to condemn myself even though all the world should exculpate me.

On the other hand, accordance with absolute law does not bring with it a natural complaisance; neither contentment at the triumph of our own prudence, nor the enjoyment of others’ respect: it is rather an experience of ‘value’ which carries with it neither success nor misfortune. It is that experience of a unique and incomparable dignity which consists in the unity and freedom of the inner life—unity because no changing circumstances of life determine his will who understands and recognises the command ‘Thou shalt.’ In the midst of confusing multiplicity he has realised himself as something ‘whole,’ and has reached ‘unity,’ and he has gained an independence and freedom so unique that it is to him inconceivable how others



can misemploy this term for the unrestraint of impulse or the prudent use of events and human beings which to him appears to be servitude. All the more surprising is such an effect of right action since obedience to an absolute command may really be mere renunciation; the pain of self-denial; and that sharpened by the fact that the urgency and reality of those other volitional reasons may in the presence of 'Thou shalt' appear as a powerless phantom-king.

This fundamental fact of the moral life we can comprehend in no other way than by the thought that in it we really reach our destiny, the deepest characteristic of our spiritual life—the impulse to unity and freedom. As in a dream we strive after it in a thousand purposeless ways so long as we only live for the moment and for desire. Our enjoyment of the beautiful carries us higher and deeper; but even freedom of contemplation is not the highest; 'eternal life' in the enjoyment of a work of art is not the deepest peace of inner unity; it is only 'the good will' that becomes both whole and free in its doing.

Such considerations bring us of themselves still deeper into the marvel of the moral world. Is not this independence and freedom of a human being standing in the stream of the transitory his unity with the ultimate foundation of all reality—with that reality which is of the highest value? And does it not hereby first attain its truth? And further, while that 'Thou shalt' depending on the determination of our will involves our responsibility, we can do no other than unreservedly accept the fact of this freedom; or, again, give up what we have asserted of the moral law. On this point we must, in order to obviate confusion, observe that the word freedom is used in another sense than just now—not of the internal sense of independence, but of the freedom to decide. What this precisely is we (in order to avoid repetitions) postpone to that part of our treatise in which we must give a more connected account of the tremendous question whether it is possible reasonably to maintain the unlimited force of the imperative: 'Thou shalt.' And for the same reason we must also consider how the moral law asserts itself in that highly complicated phenomenon which in our language we call the conscience. Our examination so

far has been nothing else but an attempt to illustrate those separate aspects of moral action of which we for the most part think when we speak of conscience.

Avoiding this kind of way of looking at the subject for the present, we must be careful, in respect of this imperative 'Thou shalt,' to avoid an exaggeration. We must not be understood to assert that it is always and everywhere and in every man felt to have equal force. It may often be a very insignificant phenomenon, may so far as our judgment of moral content goes even be an unmoral something by which, however, even in the abandoned, or in those still very imperfect, there dawns a presentiment of the majesty of the moral law in distinction from those other powers—even that of custom—which bind him the most strongly. There can, on the other hand, be a highly developed social custom of wide prevalence without the single individuals on whom it has influence experiencing the absolute demand which the 'good' makes on them. It is plain that 'Thou shalt' cannot with like ease connect itself with any content; absolute law in the strictest sense can only be that which is of universal application for individuals under all circumstances of life, and still more for collective mankind. It would be easy to work out the idea that between the two main lines of the moral life, that is to say of self-discipline and benevolence, and the form of absolute law an inner affinity subsists; that with progress in respect to that content this form of the moral law comes into continually clearer consciousness; but that it is only in union with the highest content that 'Thou shalt' becomes perfectly intelligible, or, in terms of Christianity, that it is in conversion that it is truly realised.

All those main points of view of moral good, from which its nature is plain, have been treated as simply as possible, and perhaps become still plainer when attention is drawn to the fact that these aspects are often not at all explicitly distinguished. And the reason of this is that, as a matter of fact, they stand partly in an inner relationship to each other. Prominence has already been given to the statement that 'norms' and even 'motives' in respect of their ascertained content can easily be deduced from 'ends.' The norm, however,

so far as there is bound up with it the sense of obligation, stands in closer relation to the command, 'Thou shalt'; and it cannot be gainsaid that personal subjection to an absolute law is the highest moral spring of action. Other questions having more immediate reference to motives may for the time being be set aside—such as that whether motives become active through special emotions, or by realisation of ideas of value, and in particular how both these springs of action may be interconnected; and again how far motives must be, or rather can be, both impulse to, and power for, moral action. But while these internal relations between the various chief points of view and their closer definition have justice done to them in the course of our examination, it is a source of endless confusion when they are not, so far as practicable, plainly distinguished at the outset as we have above attempted to do. In particular, it is only possible when these are thus presented to test each ethical view as a whole, and to see whether and how far it does justice to those points of view which are determining factors in our knowledge of ethics. For if these have not all a like claim to consideration, at any rate reasons ought to be given for leaving them out of account. Instead of this, "new outlines of a morality of the future" are appearing which plainly show that their authors have no suspicion of the fulness of these at least possible points of view.

All so far established has reference to the fundamental concepts which throw light on the nature of ethics. We add to our notice of this raw material of concepts just for the sake of completion the following, with a view to later necessary discussion. The much-used expressions, 'empirical,' 'intuitive' (idealistic) ethics, relate to the *origin* of morals. The first of these seeks that origin in the experience of the individual, and especially in that of nations; the second does not necessarily deny the value of experience, but lays stress on the view that, in the last resort, we must assume the existence of an original moral faculty in men. Two other terms, 'autonomous' and 'heteronomous' ethics, relate to the basis on which the validity of ethics rests. The first affirms that this basis is in the human will itself; the second, that it is in something external, whether

in God, or in some other authority in life, such as the Family, the State, the Church, or the like. For the present it is enough to ask whether this antithesis is not comprehended in a higher unity. The Christian conception of morals plainly points to this. Of course, the view taken of origin and validity depends on that of the nature of ethics. Finally, there are those who speak of the 'principle' of ethics, and by this is meant that which is the decisive thought in any intuition of the Good—the Christian idea, for instance, or the Buddhist. But it is not for the most part made clear by some under which of the above-named points of view this decisive thought is contemplated, whether, *i.e.*, under that of the highest end, motive, rule, or under that of the imperative 'ought,' or, as the subject really requires, under all these points of view. This want of perspicuity veils the weak spot in any particular form of ethics, and silence is maintained on it—for instance, on such a point as to the motives of good action. For, as Schopenhauer says, "how does any assertion about the Good help us if we cannot show how it becomes operative?"

We may conclude our discussion of fundamental concepts by an appeal to actual life. These notions gain colour if we grasp the moral process in an event in which this process presents itself to us most immediately and personally, such as the effect on our own personality of morally exalted persons. What is it that we experience when we come into contact with a will ruling over its natural impulses and strong enough to dominate us? which ministers to us of its goodness and serves the world and time because devoted to the service of the Eternal? We are at once in a special manner humbled and exalted as we stand face to face even with a stranger in whom we seem yet to get a glimpse of our true nature, and are confronted with the question whether we ourselves are now willing what and how we ought to will. This experience, which makes the life of the poorest rich, and without which the richest are poor, we have attempted in these formulæ to bring in a preliminary way to the simplest possible expression.

Still, one net gain of these general explanations must be insisted on. However much they still consistently stand in



need of closer definition, they have certainly advanced us further than that conception of moral action according to which it is merely reasonable action, the action of reason on nature, which is Schleiermacher's view. In fact, this does not mark out the sphere of morals but of civilisation, the conquest of nature whether for the ends of practical life or in the intellectual region of science and art. We who live to-day have been more urgently compelled than earlier generations to recognise that the advance of civilisation is far from being coterminous with the progress of the Good in the world; nay, that very much indeed that has the most incontrovertible claim to the great name of the Good can only maintain itself in antagonism to an immorally shaped civilisation—one of the hardest tasks of Christian ethics. Civilisation and morals must be sharply differentiated at the outset—and this quite apart from the fact that in such an idea of ethics it cannot be made at all clear in what respect moral action differs from other mental activities. With this conviction another closely coheres: that, if we are to be content to consider the will as a peculiar faculty which arises in the self-development of our life, and not closely investigate the meaning of the obligation 'Thou shalt,' ethics cannot attain its proper dignity.



## CHAPTER II.

### OPPONENTS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

WE started with the thought that it is indispensably necessary to compare critically and contrast the systems of our opponents. In order to become acquainted with them all accurately we should be obliged to take into consideration the whole of those fundamental concepts noted in giving some provisional account of ethics. We should be obliged to ask our opponents to define End, Motive, Rule, as well as how they understand the moral imperative 'ought,' whether they assign it any value, and to what extent. We must likewise hear what their opinion is of the origin and value of morals. Such a procedure would bring to light the immense variety of answers given to the question: What is the Good? The knowledge which would in this way be elicited whether these fundamental concepts are closely connected with each other, and in what way, would be particularly instructive. Irrespective of the minuteness of this procedure, it would, however, not clearly bring out the positions of the most important of the opponents. Still, from which of the many once more mentioned points of view are we to commence our short review? The moral imperative '*ought*' seems the most natural starting-point. But opponents often boast of their advantage in being able to state the goal of Christian action with more clearness than Christian ethics. Besides, on the question of norms or rules—on that which 'ought' to be done—there is less dispute; for at any rate all alike consider benevolence towards others and the conquest of

self as Good. That is, of course, only correct up to a certain point; even here the differences are much greater than at first sight appears. Now, can we put the question of *motives* so far in the rear as many do? Often enough will the conviction arise that so little can be said of these because we have so little that is satisfactory to say. But let us follow our opponents into the region in which they see their strength. And indeed in this way we have, in the main, only to consider the resolute opponents of Christian ethics. That which separates others who are largely its friends, and do really admit the force of the moral imperative 'Thou shalt,' can be dealt with in the course of our proof of the truth of the Christian position.

Still, the common conviction that men are right when they surround the word 'Good' with a special sanctity, and that, in spite of all errors and failures, they are not, at the bottom, deceived as to what at any rate should be named 'Good,' does at least so far bring our opponents into unison with Christian ethics. It was reserved to our generation to maintain the opposite opinion and render it impressive and influential in wide areas—in other words, to set up an ethical system which can only claim this name, because, of course, it gives some answer to the question: How are we to order our lives? but not because it would order them in accord with the 'Good' in a meaning in which this word is comparable with the sense hitherto assigned to it. This great contradiction not merely of Christian ethics, but of every possible system of ethics (in any intelligible use of words), it is very necessary that we should note attentively.

#### THE DEVALUATION OF ALL VALUES.

We do not suggest that ideas of this kind have never been thought before. Socrates combated the Sophists on these points; they return again in the issue between Christianity and the ancient heathen world, and also at the close of the mediæval period, in the renascence previously to the Reformation. But more resolute, bolder, more reckless and influential than

such leaders, Friedrich Nietzsche sets himself "on the further side of good and evil"; declares that the prevailing judgment on good and evil is a mere prejudice which has arisen from the enslavement of the weak; that it is an inversion of the original judgment of men that the 'Good' is what is strong, superior; and he demands a return to the original conception, so that mankind may be raised on to a new plane; and the 'super-man,' the goal of all desire, may come; and in the eternal circularity of all things may come again and again. This, in brief, is the content of Nietzsche's message, of his gospel, which, appearing in a series of critical essays, he announced with the tone of a prophet under the title *Zarathustras*. Let us try to give some account, in his own words, of the meaning of this message.

"Forward!" he cries; "even our old morality belongs to comedy. Whoever would have peaceful slumber used before falling asleep to speak of 'good' and 'evil'! There is an old delusion which is called good and evil! The old tables must be broken to pieces: 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt do no murder'! Nay, do not spare thy neighbour! Good men never speak the truth! Be courageous, impassive, scornful, violent, then wisdom will love you! Your love of your neighbour is only a bad form of your love of yourself: rather do I counsel you to flee from your neighbour, and to keep love at the furthest distance."

Therefore good and evil in the usual sense is a delusion. But how did this delusion arise? 'Good,' responds he in answer, was once that which is strong, noble, mighty. Therefore did the weak, justly oppressed, resist with the only weapon they had. They made weakness into a virtue, proclaimed submissiveness, good faith, love, and also self-conquest, considerateness, moderation in the presence of reckless power 'good.' Weakness was tortured into merit, feebleness into goodness, abjectness into humility, subjection into obedience. At the goal salvation beckons as a reward! The time will come when weakness is strength! It was the priests who led the way in this devaluation of the term 'good,' for they were not strong, certainly not the Jew-priests. It was thus this

slave-revolt in morals began. Christian love is but the most alluring form of this slave-morality! It was the man who let himself be bound in social fetters, this fool, this yearning and despairing prisoner, who invented 'the evil conscience' which is in sooth the most dismal of diseases.

"Yet there is healing. I teach you of the 'super-man.' Your 'mere man' is something to be conquered! What you call happiness, virtue, reason is but poverty and sordid ease. It is the grand contempt for these that fashions 'the higher man.' Not your sin but your contentedness cries up to heaven! What is good and what is bad only the man of master-will knows. And it is he who makes human destiny, gives to the earth its meaning, and shapes the future! It is he who ordains what is 'good' and 'bad.' He will remodel everything that 'was' until his will says: I would have it so; so do I will. O will! turning-point of every difficulty, spare me for a great victory! It is to this 'higher man' and only to him, the man of master-will, that that is good which is now called bad—the three evils, sensuality, tyranny, selfishness! Sensuality, the fire which burns up the rabble, is to the free hearts, innocent and free, the pleasure-ground of earth, the generous thank-offering of the future to the present. Tyranny, the fiery courage of the hard-hearted, will then be like to generous aspiration! And selfishness, the saving, wholesome selfishness, which springs forth from the mighty soul of him of powerful frame, beautiful, victorious, refreshing! But the first-born is ever a sacrifice! It is a thorny path along which this man of master-will must go! Pleasure, comfort in the sense of the mass of men, is not his lot."

This hope of the coming of the 'super-man' is not fulfilled once for all. The inextinguishable desire of life finds rest only in the thought of eternal return—that desire for life which glows in the song:—

O Mensch, gib Acht!  
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?  
Ich schlief, ich schlief,  
Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht.  
Die Welt ist tief.

Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht  
 Tief ist ihr Weh.  
 Lust—tiefer noch als Herzeleid.  
 Weh spricht : vergeh !<sup>1</sup>

“Surely all desire longs for eternity, longs for deep, deep eternity. And the thought of return to life again which stills this desire of life is this, that all things come back again and we with them, and that we have already existed innumerable times, and all things with us. Now I die and in an instant I am nothing. But the tangle of causes in which I was inextricably involved returns again. They will recreate me. I myself am a part of the causes which perpetually repeat themselves. I do not return to a new life but to this very self-same life, the eternal return which I teach as the fate of all things and of all men.”

This allusion to Nietzsche could not be very brief. For his influence cannot be underestimated by anyone who sees things clearly at the present time and asks by what tendencies it is moved. Remembering the personal fate of the originator, in the mental gloom which settled upon him, double reticence is imposed on our judgment. Even those who do not write of his life's work from the Christian standpoint have called to mind his own words: “My insight was too deep; now I care for nothing. Have I any harbour, any goal, whither my sail may carry me? Thy danger is no small one, thou free spirit, and wanderer! Thou hast lost the goal, and so hast lost thy way too!”

If we look shortly at the subject-matter, the principles only, it is allowed even by his admirers that his idea of eternal return is presented with no perspicuity. Nietzsche saw in it salvation from pessimism, but as a matter of fact it is an abyss of misery. So far at least Nietzsche was not able to make his other principle, that of the ‘super-man,’ plainer. In his negations he

<sup>1</sup> O man, give heed !  
 What says the deep midnight ?  
 I slept, I slept.  
 Out of a deep dream have I awaked.  
 The world is deep.  
 And deeper than the day declares,  
 Deep is its woe.  
 Desire—deeper than heart-sorrow.  
 Woe says : Perish !



is clear, in that "breaking to pieces of the old tables." But so far as anything definite is said concerning his idea of the 'super-man,' it is nothing fresh. It really lies altogether outside the old ethical idea, but in one respect it is a first step to it—the mastery of powerful natural impulses. Every advance beyond this first step mankind has felt to be moral advance. On the other hand, his "noble men," his "excellent men," are not in their mutual intercourse devoid of esteem and respect, they are not quite outside 'good' and 'bad'; the eagles are only become lambs as compared with eagles, the lion has among lions become a child. There is still more recognition of the 'good' in the old meaning, and indeed in its Christian connotation, in the honour given to suffering. "Comfort as you understand it," cries Zarathustras to the adherents of hedonistic ethics, "is really no goal which can be regarded as an 'end.' The discipline of sorrow, of great sorrow, know you not that this discipline can alone exalt man?" The earnestness of the question by means of which the thought of eternal returns to life is made to sink into their minds is quite reminiscent of the 'old tables.' It is, "What are we to do, that we may wish to do it innumerable times?" So much the more remarkable is it that, with such a deep understanding of single sides of Christian morals, he exhibits a passionate opposition to it as founded on religion. 'God is dead.' The belief in the 'super-man' takes the place of belief in God; it is, so to speak, religion without God, against God. The real contradiction in this whole prophesying comes out most clearly in this very point: not perchance simply for the Christian judge, but in the pathetic self-confessions of Zarathustras. "I do not know the blessedness of receiving. It is my poverty that my hand never ceases from giving. O misery of all givers! O silence of all who spread the light! So great is the price which the 'super-man' pays who says, 'God is dead'! Woe to him who has no home!"

All the more pressing is the question how to explain the inordinate success of Nietzsche. Some have pointed to the force of his utterances, the most intensely German of all German literary styles (*deutscheste Deutsch*) since Goethe. It reminds us, in fact, of his own saying: "Of all writings I love that which

a man has written with his blood." It has also, without reason, been said that the curt, fearless, oracular style suits the spoilt and hurried taste of the present day, which indeed is only receptive of a conception of the cosmos which shall be entertaining. We must explore deeper sources than this. To begin with, the sole dominance of the intellect in its poverty had become oppressive; the will to live awoke. The intellect had announced *ad nauseam* its decision that all 'value,' all that is, is lost. So Nietzsche's desire of life was felt as a deliverance. Men rejoiced to feel that the world was no longer emptied of meaning. And others had likewise to the point of weariness extolled the unprofitable life, devoid of content as it is, of mere happiness. Thus many a young man was jubilant with the thought of 'the super-man' who dares to be what he is; to whom the crown of thorns which awaits the pioneer seemed more desirable than base comfort or indifference. But of course innumerable persons thought themselves of the number of the 'super-men' only because they shunned the labour to become real men at least in the present conditions. They forgot the saying of Goethe, the author of this idea of the 'super-man': "Scarcely are you free from the grossest illusion, scarcely are you master of your early childish will, than you think you are 'super-man' enough and that you may neglect to fulfil the duty of a man."

Thus has Nietzsche produced many of those effects on which he himself first poured out his Zarathustrian scorn and contempt. Many runlets trickle down from his elevation into the depths of practical materialism, of cultured and uncultured coarseness, for which he felt such a deep and sovereign contempt. Others again carry out his ideas not on the vulgar level, but into the region of platitude, as, *e.g.*, when they make their appeal to him for the thought that by regulation of marriages the 'super-man' may be bred. Consequently it is not easy rightly to depict Nietzsche's influence. Still, even this short dissertation would be too short if no notice whatever were taken of the abundant traces of his ideas, or certainly of his style of thought, in the latest literature. It is necessary besides to emphasise most strongly that it is just in those poets who show these traces the most evidently that other influences, which are in

part antagonistic, are operative. Most plainly, as is natural, the negative side of the philosopher comes to light. It was in himself the stronger, and it was the easiest to understand and to use. Thus if Sudermann in *Sodom's End* says: "Wit is the master of the world; Wit represents to us nature, truth, morals. Long live his majesty, Wit!" Or "there is no love, no duty, only nerves. We live in a world in which nothing is holy, and there is no sin! You may do and dare all, for it clothes thee!" And how notable the following equivocate: "I want again to know how an honest man feels. I want again to be able to work. Give me a fetish in which I can believe." Answer: "Do believe in yourself." But he: "Ha! ha! in myself!" Or a saying like this: "Beasts are we all; all that is of importance is that our skin should be finely marked. And a specially fine tiger of a beast is that which we call personality."

This last saying particularly reminds us of Nietzsche and his 'blonde beasts'—the Germans in their savage power, before they were infected with the 'slave-morals.' In the above context it may at the same time serve as a proof how much better these modern poets have succeeded in pouring scorn on the old morality than in giving ideal shape to the idea of the 'super-man.' These new people of Sodom go to destruction along with the old Sodomite morality; they are too weak to set up new tables. And when one of Sudermann's or Gerard Hauptmann's heroes makes the attempt, it remains an attempt only. Well says Martha in *The Home*: "I am I, of myself I become what I am; . . . if you had any suspicion what life is in the grand style!—the putting forth of every power, a taste of every sort of guilt. Guilty we must be if we would grow. We must become greater than our sins!" Clear only in its negations is this picture. And in the *Submerged Bell* all the grandiloquent language is unable to deceive us as to the inner weakness of the 'Master Henry': the greater the expectation as to the doings of the 'super-man,' the greater the disillusionment because he is in fact no actual existent. Nay, even he who is far greater, Ibsen himself, is only the prophet of a doubtful future; powerful in his destruction, poor in his constructiveness except when he exhibits those goals which are like those ever sighed for of

old: when "truth and freedom are to be the pillars of the coming social era." But this again shows us how one-sided it would be to assert that there are more than points of contact between these visionaries and Nietzsche. We shall consequently meet them again in a wholly different context.

Our object has simply been, before setting before ourselves the great variety of moral ideals which are in competition with the Christian conception, strongly to emphasise the fact that a powerful tendency of the present time runs counter to all that has heretofore been regarded as 'good' and 'bad,' set forth in the expression "devaluation of all values," "the thither side of good and evil." If we do not, while we listen to expressions of the opinions and spirit of the present time, always hear something of this roaring surf which threatens to sweep away all morality as an island in the ocean, then not only is our observation incomplete, but we fail to have a full conception of the seriousness of the conflict.

#### THE OPPONENTS OF DEFINITE CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

How we can find our way in the multitude of those views which offer themselves as substitutes for the Christian system, and even compatible with it so far as they do not aim at any 'devaluation of values' in the sense spoken of, has been above alluded to (p. 24 f.). Their advocates themselves see an advantage in being able to state the end of moral action clearly and convincingly. Therefore let us consider what they have to say on this point. The remaining criteria or points of view to which we drew attention will of themselves receive their due attention when we would discover what is to be understood by the term Good. Thus: *to what Goal is action or conduct to be directed if it is to be called Good?* Now it is the special feature of modern ethics that it seeks this goal here and now, in the world of our experience. The really chief objection to Christian ethics is that, transcending this world, it sees the highest goal of the moral life in the eternal kingdom of God. Consequently we must commence with those exponents of modern ethics who treat that characteristic mark which they boast as their advantage



with the most seriousness. Should it then appear that all by no means confine themselves within this limit, but rather look beyond this boundary, and instead of limiting the goal of action to this world (immanent ethics) conceive of one that is above it (transcendent ethics), then we possess a doubly welcome reason for asking this question: Is it not possible that this transcendence is an inseparable part of the nature of morality? And then still further, if this be so, is not the way and manner in which Christians define this goal far preferable? An important difference is manifest in the first class of these most distinctively modern systems, not only for the Christian observer, but one to which prominence is given by their exponents; and although as a matter of fact it nowhere appears in a pure form, it is important as regards the treatment of the subject-matter. Namely, the following:—If the final End which we ought to realise by moral action is one that belongs entirely to the present, and is a part of our experience in this world only, then it may either belong immediately to our inner life as the agents, or it may lie in that which we realise by our action. We take this now merely as an expression of a simple fact. Of course we cannot make anything at all an End—there is nothing that we can will to realise—which has no value for us. That is simply impossible (p. 8). If, therefore, we have said the End which we would realise by our action may lie outside us, that is not the same as saying that this is something indifferent to us, but only that it is not ‘Good,’ ‘Moral,’ merely for the sake of the *value* which it has for the agent. In the other and first-mentioned case this is exactly what is asserted. The agent cannot wish for anything but his own pleasure, his happiness, his desire, however variously the term is used: of course it is not merely sensuous desire that is here thought of. But this is undeniable: if the final Goal of moral action is the agent himself alone, that is self-evidently the same as saying—the End is his happiness or pleasure. Therefore it is that this view of ethics is called the eudæmonic (hedonistic), the happiness- or pleasure-theory of ethics; the other, evolutionary ethics, or the ethics of development. For according to the latter, *vice versa*, the goal of action is not merely the pleasure of the agent, but some-



thing of value which somehow, independently of the agent, is evolved by his action.

*Hedonistic Ethics.*

Let us first of all consider the first, the eudæmonic (or hedonistic) ethics. The 'End' of moral action is happiness; that action in fact is good which realises this End.

It is not easy to present such a theory of ethics fairly. For one thing, because, to begin with, it appears contradictory to bind the Good and the Pleasant so closely together, whereas we know that each one experiences, although involuntarily and even unwillingly, how easily and frequently those two claimants for pre-eminence disagree. We may on this refer to the earlier examination of the conception of moral value-feelings (p. 11). It is under the pressure of this objection that the adherents of that view often try to do more to secure themselves against it than is compatible with their foundation principles. Mindful of this, we must begin with the proposition that no serious friend of hedonistic ethics will assert that the action which merely secures the pleasure, the happiness of the moment is moral action: that would be nothing but mere selfish action, naked egoism; and with the other proposition, that it is not isolated feelings of desire that are intended, but an enduring condition, and, generally, not mere passive feelings of desire, but satisfying exertion of all the powers as a whole. Let us, to begin with, merely put a note of interrogation to the second proposition, and ask, Is it clear? While, as to the first, it is thus explained:—Good is that which seeks the happiness of the whole, or, more carefully expressed, with reference to that which is more easily attainable, the greatest happiness of the greatest possible number. In its place of origin, in England, this is often called utilitarianism. We in Germany rather speak of the "common welfare" theory (social eudæmonism), a term which at the same time has respect to the closer definitions of both the above propositions.

We may not deny a certain attractiveness in this system. It has, for the judgment of the average man, something illuminative in its simplicity, something attractive in its

considerateness. We cannot forget how exalted ethical science has often enough been too little regardful of the desire of men in their misery for some measure of assured well-being, and this doctrine must many a time have appeared to be a weapon in the struggle for happiness. And it is little marvel that the originators of this utilitarian ethics were with such ideas considered to be all but inspired men. Benthamism appeared like a revelation; and J. S. Mill attractively depicts how even unbroken sensuous enjoyment, at its highest, could not be compared with that feeling of social and intellectual value which was summed up in the idea of "the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number." But on such utterances a judgment may follow which has to do, not with a depreciation of noble endeavour, but with exact knowledge of the real question at issue. Above all, the question forces itself on us, What sort of circumstances and activities are they which guarantee the greatest good, the highest happiness, the welfare of all? We might expect that, if the idea of morality is based on that of happiness, then no sort of uncertainty could in any way prevail as to what happiness is. That is indubitably not the case. When this utilitarian ethics arose it had a very strong inclination to connect happiness closely with cash. For such a view there would probably be no small majority, supposing the question as to the sense in which happiness should be taken could be put to the vote. Doubtless by such means the weak side of such ethics would stand out with special clearness. Consequently we are assured that it is self-evidently a question about the higher ideal value; and one of their spokesmen has said: "Better a discontented man than a contented hog"; or, "The need of needs is that a man should prove himself worthy of that name." This form of closer definition does all honour to the hearts of the hedonistic moralists; but does it to the logic of their thinking? For, even granted that it is these higher ideal activities which most further our happiness, it must still be asked more definitely: What then are they? How does it stand in regard to many discoveries and inventions? How with reference to enjoyment of noble music? In this difficult situation it is not surprising that very frequently it is

just a *circulus in definiendo* that is described if we say: That is moral which furthers the general welfare; our welfare consists in furthering the higher moral 'Goods.' At best we are helped out of this fix by emphasising quite strongly that other relevant self-interpretable proposition, that it is just the welfare of the whole which, rightly understood, is the true happiness of the individual. But supposing this assurance suffices, is it more than an assertion, if in fact a wholly new position is not thus taken up?

If this idea of the ethically good (the general welfare) which, in opposition to Christianity, is so highly praised for its simple intelligibility and applicability amid this our earthly life, is in no wise clearly definite in itself, the same thing is true also of the moral rules (norms) which are deduced from it. An example:—That the soldier may not forsake his post may be deduced certainly from the point of view of the general welfare. But that a man who, according to human calculation, is indispensable for the general welfare should venture his life to save a child cannot be so deduced. And yet probably for most adherents of hedonism that would be a particularly good action. Of course one may again explain this by saying that unselfish love is the highest human feeling of pleasure.

But then the above question is raised in an acuter form, and one quite inevitable, when we inquire as to the motives of the action. The defect of the eudæmonistic standpoint comes into a still more evident light than when we only have regard to the end and norm. What is it that *ought* to impel each individual to be zealous for the common good? Perhaps the thought, 'If I do not help, I shall not myself be helped.' This reflection will only bring us forward a little way on the right path. It is precisely in the most serious resolves that its powerlessness is evidenced. At the bottom it is only a shift of utilitarianism that it expresses itself so undecidedly about the relation between personal and others' welfare. At first it says grandly: Happiness is the End, and everyone rightly thinks of his own. But soon it is his own and another's as well. After a while: Of course another's comes first! Of course? If this were said to commence with, the strong predilection for it would dis-

appear. No! if utilitarian hedonism is to be taken seriously it must, as its more keen-sighted exponents do (as we have already repeatedly mentioned), openly accept the conviction that from its very commencement feelings of benevolence (altruistic regards) are found in men, and not merely those which are selfish. That benevolence can arise out of pure selfishness can never be established. Limitation of selfishness through a necessary regard for others may, but not actual benevolence. But even this admission—which, however, is never really made—does not suffice. For how far ought I to follow the impulse to personal pleasure, how far that of benevolence to my neighbour? More precisely, how much of the former and how much of the latter will most surely further the general welfare? To this clearly only a very complicated calculus could make answer. Who can form it? Scarcely the philosopher, even when he has a sufficiently great self-confidence in his own skill. It is more convenient to make appeal to the spirit of the community, to its historical experience, which is handed on as a heritage to each fresh generation, and especially to the great pioneer spirits. But when this impossibility of a calculus is admitted, the principle is given up that we can with direct certainty realise from clear, strong motives a plain and intelligible End, the greatest happiness of the greatest number of individuals. History, the spirit of the times, the power dominating the individual life—these ideas are all alien growths on this soil. Such thoughts belong rather to the sphere of evolutionary ethics.

It is scarcely necessary to make specially prominent how little the cult of hedonism is suited to the experience of obligation: 'Thou shalt'; and that therefore not only is not that triad of principles (End, Motive, Norm) adequately defined, but this is true also of the other point of view, that of the absolute law. On the utilitarian principle the majesty of this 'Thou shalt' is to be derived from a calculation of utility, from the approval of society, the pressure of the state, the sanction of religion as not yet fully developed: these are to be regarded as the strands of the cord out of which the conscience is made up. The reckoning will not tally even if we add the above-



mentioned ideas (in part often little emphasised, in part taken in another way), such as 'natural feelings of benevolence,' 'great men,' 'heredity.' It is, however, perfectly clear that the whole basis of eudæmonism is too narrow: that human nature, on the knowledge of which it is built, is not perfectly known in its depths. Humanity does not consist of a totality of individuals essentially alike: its manifold unity, its historical development, its deepest nature is misinterpreted. For this evolutionary ethics on which the hedonistic-utilitarian leans for help has the keener eye. The former does of itself point to the latter, and the boundaries of both are fluctuating.

It may be asked in advance in what circles the ethics of hedonistic utilitarianism prevails, since, on account of its final presuppositions, it might be thought that it can find no place in a time when the idea of evolution is predominant; and it shares these presuppositions with the century of the Renaissance, which was dominated by the idea of the natural equality of all men. Now it is certainly in process of retiring into the background where close thinking prevails, but not so much in the immediate feeling of wider districts of human life. To many its recommendation is its simplicity, which is more apparent than real; and still more the close relations of the happiness and welfare theory to the economic question. So the great majority of the social-democratic party shows a very great leaning to it. And even the so-called 'Ethical Society' is established for the most part on the utilitarian ethic. Many of its adherents verbally praise sacrifices for the good of others, which have a resemblance to Christian love of our neighbour; others demand such righteousness in all human collective life as shall bring with it perfect happiness. The claim that all this has a scientific foundation, and that as contrasted with Christian ethics, which has 'only' a religious foundation, is scarcely intelligible at a time when, face to face with social eudæmonism, the right of the single personality is advocated without limitation, as by Nietzsche; and when, on the other hand, there is the conviction that the evolutionary theory of ethics affords a much safer foundation for the moral life.



*Evolutionary Ethics.*

Utilitarian hedonism, because it inscribes Happiness on its banner, and we all are desirous of being happy and therefore feel ourselves pleasingly affected when happiness is declared to be the final goal of the moral life, is alluring; yet it is really for this reason that we feel indisposed to put faith in this message. We at once feel that there is a difference between that which is 'pleasant' and that which is 'good,' and that the words ought not to be too closely identified, however much we should like them to be. We have this feeling also in regard to all those enrichments of the connotation of 'the pleasant' introduced as quietly as possible by utilitarians. They almost all originated in the evolution theory. We may provisionally remark that the solution is found not in the idea of being happy but of being 'something,' and we then at once feel that we have made some approach to the true meaning of the Good, however indefinite. It may perhaps be much too indefinite, but still a step towards the truth. To become 'something' aside from the idea of 'being happy' is an approach towards the comprehension of what is meant by 'moral.' 'To be something'—that calls us onwards and upwards, and we have a presentiment of that transcendent value which, however much it is now our possession, is still more than we have at present attained to, and helps to raise us to that which we ought to be—to 'something' right, whole, complete, Good.

Of course, when closely examined, this concept of evolution is ambiguous, and exhibits numerous faults—so ambiguous that it is patient of all the various meanings which the history of the term has already given it. Evolution is an illuminative concept when we think of the life of a plant which unfolds itself from the seed and the root to the stems, leaves, flowers, and ripe fruit, back to the seed again. This is a real 'becoming' anew, a growth from within in harmony with the nature wrapped up in the seed. Evolution is a term applicable to all 'becoming' in nature, to the formation of the solar system from nebulæ, the formation of the crust of the earth, the series of living existences; even to history, *e.g.* the development of Luther into

a Reformer, or of the German Empire, and to every realm of the mental and moral life generally. We cannot speak of its application to the moral life without calling to mind what the connotative marks are which the idea must have, or rather, which are almost everywhere taken for granted, when it is applied to the remotest realms, as if there existed a common agreement as to its meaning, an accurate, sharply defined notion of it. That this is not so is at once its charm and its danger. In its general use, so various as it is, at the bottom there is merely the assumption of gradual, progressive realisation of that which, with definite powers, already exists in germ, whether this may concern single forces or a definite whole of such forces, or finally the totality of all forces. In this manifold application of this notion, so little defined, the danger generally is great of concealing our want of actual knowledge by the use of a term. This is true not only in relation to the idea of End, but also to that of efficient cause, but most of all to the careless elimination of the original idea inseparable from the notion of evolution, of a causal unity at the base of this evolution, *i.e.* of design, power, driving force (on these logical difficulties in the concept *cf.* Sigwart's *Logic*). Still more fateful for ethics is something else, though, for the most part, merely for the present tendencies of thought. To a greater extent than ever before the consciousness of the exhaustless wealth of the forces which the world of our experience discovers to us has come to our generation. The pressure of this world is so involuntarily powerful that it easily becomes overwhelming and gains the sole dominance over our souls.

This world becomes unconsciously the 'be all and the end all'; it fills up the place of God; it is even the Infinite, not merely in the sense in which it, without doubt, presents itself to us as such, but as the Absolute; for a personal God there seems to be no longer room. And indeed there is only the universe, if it is taken in detail and as a whole in the light of the theory of evolution. Overwhelmed by it, to the modern consciousness it seems as if by this magic word—which at least appears to open up long-veiled secrets—the final secret itself had been brought to light, and in the discovery of the laws of develop-

ment the riddle of the world was solved. This tendency of thought puts itself forward in opposition to Christian faith in a double direction: a double direction is especially strange and repugnant in this matter. Namely, it is at once opposed to the idea that a personal God, distinct from the world, works on the world and in the world; and that in the course of cosmic process any phenomenon is of surpassing importance or eternal significance. The two theses are naturally connected, and at the bottom are finally based on that grave defect in the development theory, the want of precise definition, the indeterminateness of the use of the term evolution. Evolution has had its greatest triumphs in the realm of nature. It is conceivable that it could be so applied in the spiritual sphere as it has approved itself in the other; and even the methods of investigation carried over, as improved, from one sphere to the other. Conceivable but not warrantable; because the whole hypothesis rests on an imperfect insight into the nature of knowledge. But it is just this that is of decisive importance in ethics. Does not the word development contain in itself, as a matter of course, ideas which, however valuable in another realm and in another context, directly contradict the nature of the moral will? Is not, *e.g.*, that imperative so often alluded to, 'Thou shalt,' put into the background or given an imperfect connotation? Is not this so when under the pressure of the common idea of development, of the point of view of the gradual progressive 'Becoming'; that is, in fact, in the kingdom of nature it stands in the fore-front of our consciousness? Is not the possibility of an inner transformation essentially a strange idea to the worshipper of the modern evolutionary theory?

Still the question here is not yet about our verdict on evolutionary ethics, but to give a short exposition of its nature. When it is said: 'The end of moral action is the development of the moral capacity,' of course not much is said so far; for every capacity can develop itself. In fact, the most varied content has been accepted for the idea of evolution: and, indeed, both for that of the individual and for that of mankind. Accordingly the ethics of the individual and of universal

evolutionism are phrases used. To the first class all those belong who inscribe on their banner the perfection of personality, however varied their thoughts of this perfectibility. In particular, the Stoics grandly regarded it as the independence of the wise man of all external circumstances, as the independence of a person face to face with nature; in which thought we clearly again discover the one mark of the moral, of which we spoke, and in fact pursued with so much zeal that we were logically led much further, namely, to the unreserved recognition of an 'Absolute Law' and of an 'End' lying above and outside the world. Otherwise this Stoic independence, while we admire it, gives us the impression of want of content and of something unreal.

For us to-day that form of perfectibility which concerns the individual is the most important, and which we find embodied in the arresting splendour of the highest genius, Goethe, in his youth, and made intelligible to all by his poetic creation. The ideal is a nature cultured to a fine personality, in the fulness of his life, the harmonious self-realisation of the individual in the wealth of his nature (the individualistic-æsthetic ideal). The phrase 'good and bad, like nature' reminds us without giving us any explanation of the questionings which arise as soon as we seriously try to distinguish the natural from the moral. The first part of *Faust* will for ever remain the great memorial of this ideal, *i.e.* one side of Faust. The picture of him exhibits quite different features, and the deeply pathetic 'judged,'<sup>1</sup> 'saved' in the prison scene is itself a profound Christian judgment on that ideal, when it puts itself forward as the highest.

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to the close of the first part of *Faust*:

*Margaret.*

Thine am I, Father! O shut not the gate  
Of mercy on me!  
Ye angels! ye most holy spirits! now  
Encamp around me! and protect me now!  
Henry, I tremble when I think on thee.

*Mephistopheles.*

She is judged!

*Voice (from above).*

Is saved!

BLACKIE'S translation.—TR.



Of course in this way the first part ends with a great question, and the answer which the second gives is not a definitely Christian one, however much Christian influences make themselves felt even there. Or, more precisely, the individual, evolutionary ethics does in Goethe merge in that other, the form above mentioned, in the idea of universal evolution. It is on mankind as a whole that attention is fixed, on the wealth of its development up to now. From it there falls light on further progress: Forward! cries this solution, in all the realms of creative mind! To contribute his share to this general progress is the task and the pleasure of the individual. Let the words of our poet be a witness of that:—

The world is wide and life is broad.  
Years of striving, apart all fraud,  
Often seek we for its meaning,  
On each fresh solution leaning.  
All the past of good it gives me,  
All the new truth freely take we.  
Glad in mind and pure in will  
The goal of life advances still.

West and East, the ancient and the modern, nature and spirit, all existence is comprehended in the idea of a great development. There have been immense alterations in men's modes of thought and life since the death of Goethe. But it is impossible to overestimate the influence of the evolutionary hypothesis on moral conceptions even for our generation. We must for the present refrain from more than noting how by its indefiniteness it exactly fits in with this change. Many individual forms once famous, in which it shaped itself—*e.g.* Hegel's philosophy—are gone; the tendency to be antithetic to Christianity (as regards the points above mentioned) remains, and has increased in many respects. In the exuberant rhetoric on the occasion of the Goethe commemoration, the keynote was, as a matter of fact, the glorification of the evolutionary hypothesis. It is to this that the vow refers: "Thy teaching we will honour, thou great one, thou exalted one, the unsurpassed and unsurpassable, comparable to no other earthly being!"



Leaving such rhetorical flights of festal poetry, the evolution theory has in sober scientific earnest found a significant explanation in the ethics of Wundt. The ethical end is the development of mankind in its entire psychical being, as this works out in the great social activities of Religion, Science, Art, Community, State. It is an unending task at which mankind labours; the sense of its development is consciously felt only at intervals; its impulse is ever to rise above itself to higher stages. The seat of this development, *i.e.* the final operative force, is the collective will. Prevailing over the individual will, it creates and sets forth new 'Ends' ('Heterogeneous Ends'). There is no need to point out the grandeur of this conception. This is quite another end than that of the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number. There is no need ingeniously to explain away all that so far has been regarded as exalted and noble, or recognise it stealthily, and an infinite perspective is opened up. Accordingly, the rules of action become more definite, and they are vastly more nearly related to those of Christian ethics. Naturally, the highest summits reached by the present are the true starting-points for future development; while a special advantage is, at least to begin with, the emphasis laid on the will as the vehicle of development. By this it becomes intelligible to the individual how it is that those dominating motives are serviceable. But the more willingly we recognise this the less is it possible to suppress a doubt. If, that is to say, the collective will is the absolute lord of the individual will, then this latter disappears as an independent entity. The individual will is only a form of the collective will; nay, in the end it is appearance contrasted with reality. It thinks it decides, and the decision is really imposed from without. It does not act, it is acted on. That is, the moral life is a really remarkable compound bit of the life of nature: 'Thou shalt' and 'I will' are lost. This we must at any rate assert, although the proof of it can only be adduced later on. What is more, this glitter of grandeur is dimmed by that by which at first the moral end was illumined. This happens directly we seriously reflect that in the last resort the ideal remains a

great unknown something. It will never show itself complete in the course of development to any generation.

Development pushes on, irrestrainable, infinite. This 'infinite' has double meaning. It blinds us so long as we regard it as synonymous with 'absolute.' But it cannot help becoming clearer to us that it means without *end*, and the absolute without *goal*. At this point the great question is suggested whether the moral end ought to be limited to this world, whether the final word of wisdom is the ethics of the present life, the ethics which makes this 'Immanence' its base. Here we may just call to mind two sayings of Goethe, the great originator and, so to speak, saint of this moral philosophy. The first stands in the suppressed epilogue to the second part of *Faust*: "Man's life is like a poem; it has certainly its commencement and its end, but yet it is not a whole." The second runs: "How stale and flat is such a life if all its activity, all its driving leads continually to fresh activity, and at the end no desirable end accomplished rewards you!" It would indeed be insipid to call the great, glorious ends, Country, Knowledge, Art, 'flat'; but is it not necessitated that there must be a 'final desirable end' when work for them with continually fresh courage and ever like faithfulness is possible?

It is not all the representatives of the evolutionary ethics who are to be so named to-day who have conceived and elaborated their principles like the above-named philosopher. Some have no more than an inclination for this essentially eudæmonistic ethics to lean on the evolutionary theory. Others follow openly and with pride the flag of evolution, and do in fact give to their principles a special turn or colour according to the special department of life in which their activity lies. For one the principle of evolution receives an æsthetic stamp; for another the love of country fills the soul as the highest end of life. At the present time two particular types of the evolutionary ethics are widely spread and popular. One of these is determined by natural science, the other by political economy. Marx and Engel saw in the evolution of economic conditions, in the production and the use of economic products, the core of all evolution. The evolution of all other

forms of activity is only an associated phenomenon of the former. Even art and religion are therefore only reflex phenomena of the battle for bread, the means of living. This is the science of brotherhood, the single infallible panacea in the circles of social democracy—or, to speak more accurately, that so called by their leaders, for the masses favour utilitarian hedonism. But these ideas of Marx excited them to the conflict. Everything is to be made to turn on the alteration of present industrial conditions.

### *Monism.*

Often the industrial is associated with the natural science basis, and this latter is on its own account a great power, especially in the upper ten thousand. Not infrequently the system of ethics influenced by science and erected on this foundation is called *Monism*, a term emphasising the unity of the spiritual and the natural in the cosmic process, in which unity the former is subsumed under the latter. Thus all is natural in agreement with the tendency of the day, proud of its great scientific achievements in the mastery of nature. In this direction goes, *e.g.*, the influential work of Spencer, whom Darwin called ‘our great philosopher.’ To others the term Monism is merely a grand name for the materialism which is no longer attractive, or a veil for general obscurity in final questions (*cf.* Haeckel’s *Riddle of the Universe*). A difference which grows more marked has here arisen. The evolutionary ethics associated with scientific concepts had at first an intelligible leaning to recognise unregarding brute force in the battle of existence, even in the sphere of human life, therefore inclined to favour egoism and to derive from that the ever-weak impulse to benevolence. Others in an increasing number consider benevolence a product of the battle of selfish interests which has thus grown into a law of human life. ‘You cannot go back to a stage that is passed and won,’ it is proclaimed to those who draw such a conclusion from the evolutionary theory: ‘the sympathetic-altruistic social sense, once created, is eternal and rises to ever-fresh developments.’ ‘I am not justified in doing just as I like because I can.’ ‘The personal

ego has become wide as the world ; the love of our neighbour stands high over all.' Occasionally in this circle the voices are heard of those who seek to bind the idea of development with that of real freedom ; or anyhow sing psalms over its development in individuals which, if taken seriously, must lead to the recognition of a degraded idea of responsibility in any adequate sense. Strong words may be heard about that misconceived determinism which leads to a fatalistic disregard of personal veracity, and results in the unfruitful worship of the idols of evolution.

From this it is intelligible that there are not wanting those who attempt to reconcile monistic and Christian ethics, who with more cleverness than clearness explain the idea of evolution as essentially similar to the following of Christ, the core of all religion. That is useful, say they, which helps the individual ; good, that which is for the common welfare. And it is by evolution that this 'good' is victorious ; this morality is the development of our nature. Drunkenness will cease like slavery. We are only at the commencement. The true, the good, and the beautiful are that Self which is more than we are. It will be achieved. We shall consciously become one with the All good or with the 'moral All.' Our power will hereby grow in an unsuspected way, the duration of existence will increase, nay, the dream of eternal life become an actuality ; a man without this hope is like an eagle with its wings clipped. At the commanding word of science religion will rise from its bier, it is not dead (Powell). But the development theory and the Christian faith have been made to approach each other with more modesty ; in England the literature increases which makes use of the heading 'Christianity and Evolution.' We shall need to make up our minds under what sole conditions a real, honourable peace is possible : the merely clever institution of a relation between terms is little helpful, as, *e.g.*, the juxtaposition of original sin and evolution in the proposition that we bring the ape and the tiger with us into the world as a result of evolution.

Again, it is to be emphasised that the indefiniteness of the concept evolution allows of very various moral ideals, and that it is scarcely by more than a courteous etiquette that very



varied and contradictory ideas are recommended to the modern consciousness. Especially has that double tendency in ethics under the influence of physical science a not inconsiderable counterpart in present-day literature. Besides the tones which clearly recall Nietzsche, and in part are more intimately connected with the idea of heredity, right on to the extreme that we do not properly speaking live, but are creatures indwelt by phantom spirits, there are other commingling tones which laud love as the highest bloom so far of evolution, and as the ripening fruit, by its own inherent force, of the future, *e.g.*—“How shall I call it?—self-sacrifice, self-suppression? It is somewhat that has to do with self, or rather is the antithesis of it. That impresses me, and so you can make much out of me” (Sudermann); “and everything is indeed forgiven thee but that one thing, that thou hast no will” (Ibsen).

#### *Positivism.*

Positivism is the next most nearly allied to the ethics so far treated, the evolutionary. This peculiarly employed term is intended to mean that only facts of observation ought to give answer to the question: How are we to order our life? This so far nobody at all will deny, and the definition will be better understood by the converse: the facts only, with express exclusion of any inquiry as to the final Why? Wherefore? What the meaning of this is will be made clear by comparison with evolutionary ethics. The evolution idea remains undefined in its system, and many of its most logical exponents speak in the plainest possible way, and with a kind of enthusiasm, of the unattainability of any knowledge of final ends, and of how much of obscurity there is in the ‘whence,’ the past. Positive ethics says: Let us stand aloof from the unascertainable, let us shake ourselves free from the pursuit of the impossible and so employ our whole energy on the attainable. Let us determine the laws of conduct from the facts accessible. Not only are the gods dethroned, but also science, with its search for final causes and a final end, metaphysics as well as theology. Both these are dissolved by the third—the only science is the knowledge of the laws of actual life and activity, biology, *i.e.*, in reference to the



individual, sociology in relation to mankind. Mankind 'continued long to want' until it turned from the 'ought to be' to what really is. Ethics thus becomes social statistics, a theory of the self-ordering of society. The solution runs: Reverence the men of knowledge, and down with parties! The faith which we favour is a demonstrable one, when all the hollow idols of the old morality, such as freedom, lie on the ground. Now, what is the content of this demonstrable belief? Order and love, the sacrifice of the strong for the weak, reverence of the weak for the strong—in short, an altruistic realism. Providence, the moral ordering of the world, find their seat in the souls of men. The highest law which the science of sociology finds is the law of the organic union of mankind. Thus far positive ethics has designated itself the rehabilitation of Christian ethics without God. Man, the known nature of mankind, humanity, becomes men's God. So in the definition of the ethical norm this ethics has a point of contact with the Christian system. Love of our neighbour is often attractively lauded. Important authors like George Eliot, Loti, have, not without success, pleaded its cause. And what is more, it has not failed in works of mercy. In the French home of Positivism (Auguste Comte, Littré) homes for the poorest of the poor, for children suffering from incurable maladies, the result of social neglect, have been founded under its auspices. Whether that law of the social organism can really be derived from facts of observation only; whether it really is so plain as its adherents think, and further, how it may be carried out in individual wills, unless these are made into mere involuntary tools of a natural necessity; whether, finally, ethics can stop short of a clear, known, final End,—all these questions are here only noticed in passing.

### *Pessimism.*

As 'Positive' ethics becomes most easily intelligible from the defects of the evolutionary, and is, so to speak, an abbreviated form of this system, so that the two often enough intermingle, and especially where the originally French principles of Positivism have found entrance into England and Germany; so we can best grasp the one more remaining system, that of conscious

*Pessimism*, from the main defects of all the ideals so far considered, and as we have seen them appear as competitors for the approval of our generation. We must revert to the point, on the divergence of opinion on the determination of the moral goal, some seeking it in this world, and others in that which transcends it. The competitors so far considered of Christian ethics all belong to the first class. But no art can juggle away many unsolved questions by this means. Let us reconsider how End, Norm, Motive were defined; further, how the imperative 'Thou shalt' found in these systems no recognition—everywhere questionings of this sort. One system criticised another, and then suffered a similar fate itself. It is intelligible even apart from Christian ethics how that, contemporaneously with them all, the appeal to that which is independent of this world was not wholly silenced. And indeed, irrespective of Christianity, in the sense of a negation of the world. The tendencies described all found their support in love of life filled with the faith that the goal was attainable at which they aimed, and that it was worthy of self-sacrifice. Of course other wefts in the web repeatedly showed themselves, but optimism prevailed; what was dark might perhaps be interpreted as the intensity of bright light. On the other hand, he who purposely directed his attention to defects, and as a result doubted whether a goal belonging to the inner being could be the final goal of human endeavour, and he who at the same time, for whatever reason, declined the supersensual goal which the Christian faith regards as characteristic of moral action, were logically forced to the ethics of pessimism. This says: The extinction of existence, as worthless, is the true End of moral action. Not only is there unalterably far less pleasure in the world than pain (consequently all eudæmonistic (hedonistic) forms of ethics precarious), but also all the much-belauded 'goods' of evolutionary ethics disappear on close consideration. In its innermost core society is ever growing worse. Honour without virtue, reason without wisdom, satiety without happiness, are its stamp, on which, too, there is more of evil than of virtue. 'Cheap and nasty' is the main principle of human action. Man is a compound of wickedness and stupidity in which the latter predominates in the

masses, and the former in men of position. These resemble wolves, those sheep; they are companionable from vanity, sympathetic from selfishness, honest from fear, pacific from cowardice, benevolent from superstition (Schopenhauer). Of course it is possible to paint in less glaring colours; but it is a feature common to and significant of the whole of the ethics of pessimism that it puts its finger on the weak places of its opponents, that it does not allow itself to be blinded by big words about high aims, and particularly that it brings to the forefront more strongly the neglected question as to the innermost motives of action. It holds an annihilating mirror in front of superficial temporal happiness. But yet it has always itself been helpless when confronted with the reproach, that in reality it is not a doctrine of human action but its annihilation; and that it remains utterly inconceivable what sort of connection must subsist between that in the highest decree transcendent End, nihilism, and the individual actual Ends which are to be the means of its realisation. To throw up this life voluntarily, or passively to await its cessation, appears to be the solitary clear result of this wisdom of the worthlessness of existence. And on motives for such action pessimism has nothing convincing to say. How could the idea of that worthlessness conquer the pressing impulse of the moment, whatever worthless End it would pursue? Even the much-praised thought of 'in harmony with the Infinite,' in the consciousness of which we feel ourselves free from the illusion of existence (E. von Hartmann), will not be proved powerful enough for that; although he who hesitates agreement is warned that he is proving himself a *déspiser* of the food of the gods, which is too fine for his appreciation. He who, finally, admits that the principle is indeed comfortless, but would regard it as a necessity, is in duty bound to the proof that the pessimistic verdict on the world and on moral action in particular is necessary; a proof which neither has been nor can be produced in the nature of the case—quite irrespective of the fact that the enthusiastic adherents of this pessimism are most numerous amongst the so-called 'well-to-do,' and do in actual life frequently behave in accordance with a wholly different verdict on the world and on

men—a witness to the inextinguishable pressure of existence in human society.

*Mixed Systems.*

Our survey of the main views on ethics which struggle with the Christian system for mastery over the minds of men of our time would be quite incomplete if we were not to mention in conclusion two other points, the first of which relates to the innumerable indefinite combinations into which these main views are worked up. These do not in themselves invariably exhibit a sharply defined outline. Equally difficult of apprehension is the mixture of views found in the manifold actualities of life. We might even speak of an ethics of the average man or of an unethical average opinion. Frequently enough we find in the same issue of a daily paper the greatest contradictions reposing peacefully side by side—praise of truth and of lying, of sacrifice and of selfishness. In commemorative leading articles we find appreciation of the value of self-sacrifice for the individual and for the nation, while at the bottom of the paper, in the *feuilleton*, incense is burnt to lust. In this the journal is a mirror of the times; a sign of the times is also the luxuriant growth of ever new magazines, in which each one promises to settle this problem of civilisation of the present day finally and for ever: often also combining the most contradictory contents. And in actual life, alongside the hard battle for bare bread is the search for happiness, *i.e.* for money, and both intertwined in all stages of society; stories of the old nobility, how honour is often dishonoured by high and low; the recreation of many nothing else but enervating work. Alongside this the humblest fulfilment of duty without reward; eyes eager and hearts pulsating with desire for all that is noble in every position and calling of life.

The second point for the needful completion of our review is a glad reference to the wide circles and eminent names of those who have a cordial regard for Christian ethics, but cannot and will not be considered as acknowledged adherents. To render an impartial judgment on them is thus especially difficult. Their antagonism to any alliance partly depends on their adoption of

a wonderful *metamorphosis* of the content of all Christian ethics, while they yet consider themselves as its true representatives,—we may mention perhaps Tolstoy; partly also that they agree to the Christian morality with considerable reservations as to the Christian faith,—we may think of many noble representatives of philosophy, statesmanship, historical science, physical science, literature. Nothing would be more unchristian than to pass an excluding judgment on these persons; scarcely anything more perplexing, for the reason that it is impossible to apply any definite test to their views. But in a connected way and without repetition it is only possible to examine them in the course of the treatment to which our subject leads.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

WE have made some acquaintance with our opponents. Our review resembled progress through a picture-gallery where works of very various styles are brought together. If we reflect that it is not a question of works of art, but on the moral shaping of our lives, then our first impression will be a depressing one. And that not merely for the Christian. Opinions widely spread recognise a great danger in the fact that, to a surprising degree, our generation is lacking in unity of conviction. And indeed who can deny that many of those difficulties which consume the energies of men of this generation arise from this—that there is no longer any common certainty as to the final Ends, Rules, and Motives of our action? For example, many social disputes were once less pressing and acute because rich and poor, high and low, in possession of common needs, not only assembled together in the same church, but also recognised the word which they listened to there as the unquestioned basis for their most secret emotions, their will and thought; although their logical consequences were not always acted on in actual life. Still, they breathed an atmosphere, so to speak, of final convictions. At present these are themselves so various that often enough one person does not any longer understand another, and does not even take any trouble to arrive at such understanding. Each one looks at things in his own way. Oddly enough, too, every fresh originator of a new view of the cosmos claims that his is for the whole world, and demands its attention. It is easily conceivable how in such claims the promise is often in inverse proportion to its

fulfilment. So far, however, as one system notices another, it is often keener in its criticism than convincing in its constructiveness. In the general estimate, therefore, the doubt continually deepens whether any truth and conviction can be gained in final questions, since every displaced cosmic theory is succeeded by a superfluity of newly offered ones. It is only in one point that any number of persons are completely agreed, and that is that the Christian ethic has lost its certainty.

An unbiassed observer might really get another impression as to that certainty: not only because, as a matter of fact, the moral ideal of Christianity, so often said to be dead, still exerts an immense silent influence, but also on account of its intrinsic character if it is only even superficially compared with its famous rivals. These mostly emphasise *one* of those points of view which pressed on our attention in considering the moral habitudes, but it cannot be concealed how many others are neglected. On the other hand, how complete in itself and yet, on all sides, rich in its bearings is the Principle of Christian ethics! And if that is mainly only an external, formal advantage, yet in regard to content it affords a presumption in favour of Christian ethics. That is to say, it really avoids the defects which overwhelm the others and with which they have been reproached not merely from the standpoint of Christianity—the difficulties which result from the assumption of a merely temporal ‘End’ and optimistic tendencies; and also not removed by the transcendental negations of the pessimistic ethics. Is it not possible that the Christian system, with its supersensual and positive ethical End, may unite the advantages of the others, and eliminate their failures? And may not its answer on the origin and validity of ethics likewise surpass that of the others? Wherefore, then, considering this possibility, the courteously cool or sometimes passionate rejection of it?

Now certainly an accurate knowledge of the nature of Christian ethics must form the foundation of a fitting proof of its truth. It is only on a close understanding of its unique character that we can base arguments for its truth. So far as that goes, all that is said later on concerning the Christian life is the setting forth of a demonstration of the peerless

superiority of Christian ethics. A passing and brief reference to the master-ideas will leave us in no doubt where the real difficulty lies, and to what points a defence and logical arguments must be directed. Let us use the criteria or points of view once more mentioned which continually come to the front when we seek to know what morality really is, what its origin, and what constitutes its validity. The highest *End* of Christian good action is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the fellowship of created spirits with the personal God of love and with each other in love, realised in the divine self-revelation through Christ. This highest End is now to be partially realised under our present earthly conditions, and completely in another world. The highest *Norm* or Rule of life is that supreme command of love to God and our neighbour including all other commands in itself. The Norm is determined by the End. The deepest *Motive* is the love evoked by divine love. In this lies the incentive and motive power to the fulfilment of that supreme command by which the highest end, divine sonship in the kingdom of God, is realised. The unique feeling of obligation, 'ought,' 'Thou shalt,' is accentuated in connection with these master-principles more urgently than in any other ethical system, and yet without exaggeration, as so easily happens in the case of the others when the subject is taken seriously. Pondering this uniqueness, the friend of Christian ethics cannot help asking in what other system these often-mentioned relations have fuller justice done to them, more simply, plainly, deeply, or more coherently. The individual and the community, utility and evolution, this world and the next, the glorification of this world or the renunciation of it; as well as all sides of morals, our relation to our neighbour, to our own nature, to the world outside of us, to God; and all so consistent that End and Rule and Motive are contained in the one word Love; even that bitter word: 'Thou shalt' acquires a more cheerful and stimulating sound without the sacrifice of its seriousness, but rather gaining fulness of truth—true obedience and submission which is real freedom and independence. To its adherents, Christian ethics so surveyed seems to be the completion of the others. For does it not combine the

truth of the empirical and intuitional theories in regard to *the origin* of ethical ideas? It is indeed the ethics of experience, of a grand history which has its goal in Christ, its centre and its source in Christ; a history, too, whose final reason, law, and goal is the living, personal God, who has so endowed and equipped men that they ripen for their eternal destiny by means of that history. And the *validity* of ethics rests both on their own personal will and on the will of God in inseparable synthesis, so that what are called the autonomy and the heteronomy of the will find a uniting principle in which freedom and dependency are one as in no other way whatever. Last and not least, Christian ethics can frankly recognise the contradiction between the ideal and the actual, between the imperative 'Thou shalt' and the 'I cannot,' because it knows how it is overcome. Elsewhere this gloomy fact is passed over with as much haste as possible, apprehended for the most part inadequately, or contradictory judgments are allowed to suffice; but here evil may be called evil, because a 'good will' is recognised, which has exercised a constraining power over the most evil, the redeeming love of God as the expression of the will of God in Christ. This is more consolatory and truer than that judgment of evil given by pessimism, which is the only other earnest one. Certainly the principles of Christian morality call forth some fresh and serious doubts on which we must shortly dwell. But for its friends this does not destroy the joy they feel in the contemplation of its grandeur, and only provokes their zeal to gain an understanding of its truth.

#### THE AVERSION TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Whence, in despite of this, arises the widespread and deep aversion to Christian ethics? We shall gain the most accurate and most valuable answer if we do not, first and foremost, give heed only to acknowledged opponents, with some of whom we have already formed acquaintance; but, at present, confine our attention to those parties and names which we have spoken of as for the most part friendly. Whatever it is that they object to will be worthy of our closest attention. It is noteworthy



how many among them agree in the classification and characterisation of ethical theory. They distinguish Greek ethics as that of an æsthetic naturalism, and Christian morality as that of the revival of supernatural motive in ethics; modern ethics beginning with the Renaissance as a resumption of the Greek ideal deepened and broadened by the progress of civilisation. Ethical philosophers, whose views differ greatly, agree in this view, and to many proof of it seems to be hardly necessary. In innumerable utterances of present-day opinion this verdict on Christian ethics is treated as if obviously true. The Christian ideal is regarded as a break in the continuity of development resumed at the Renaissance, enriched by Christian influences. It is worthy of remark that Kant is for the most part regarded as giving pause to this continuous development, however much his services to ethics are praised. This we note, that inexorable categorical imperative, the 'ought' of this philosopher, gets buried under the eulogies they bestow on him. They find that principle just as distasteful as the seriousness of the supernatural motive in Christian ethics.

This representation of Christian ethics vaguely outlined is neither correct nor consistent. It is not correct; for it rests on the implied, though neither proved nor provable, assumption that the Roman Catholic view of Christian ethics is the truly Christian one. Some examples may be given. It is said that the whole of the 'cardinal virtues' of the ancient moralists have been depreciated by Christianity. For the Greeks, insight, wisdom, was the sum-total of the moral life; the wise man was the good man; the sum of life is knowledge. But the Gospel praises the 'poor in spirit' as 'blessed,' and triumphantly asks, 'Where are the wise?' 'Has not God chosen the foolish things of this world?' Just so with the second great virtue—courage. In ancient ethics, manly courage, foe against foe; in the Gospel, the praise of gentleness, of meekness, of renunciation of rights without limit and at any cost, even to 'turning the other cheek'; military service and the bearing of arms practised with an evil conscience. It is equally so with the third virtue, 'temperance' or self-restraint. In its stead there are the fearful sayings about 'plucking out' your 'eye,' 'cutting off your right



hand,' 'taking up the cross.' Finally, there is no sense of justice recognised; the life of the state and social life are regarded with mistrust and only endured on account of indispensable needs; in fact, it is the kingdom of the 'Prince of this world,' of the 'liar and murderer from the beginning,' of Mammon. Besides, there is everywhere a limitation of the natural to the point of annihilation; love, they say, is the antithesis of all *noblesse oblige*; the whole tone of human feeling is altered; there is no joyous pride, only contrition and humility; no joy and honour, but submission to grace is to be accepted. Indeed, if that were really the whole of Christian ethics it would deserve, after all its long prevalence, to retire before the more luminous beginnings of Greek wisdom; and it would be the task of this generation to carry this on according to the needs of the richer civilisation of the present day, taught by the experience of centuries. And as there lives the Greek in every wholly and fully cultured man, we all feel, at least in the bloom of our youthful aspiration, that picture is a trial to us. But it does not strike at real Christianity, as it shines out in the person of Christ; it strikes at the monastic ideal, and even at that only on one side of it.

Without pursuing this here, we have next to affirm the opinion that such a description is not justifiable, and to add the further one, that it is not consistently carried through, inasmuch as it is immediately allowed that a series of important ideas have become the property of the consciousness of our time by means of Christianity, and that these must not be lost. In a fine way this has been shown with regard to three such ideas, those of suffering, sin, sacrifice (Paulsen). Suffering is ennobled by Christianity; as a means of education we cannot eliminate it from our deepest convictions without impoverishment. Sin and guilt are something ineradicably real; we cannot comfortably depart this life with the confession: "Without repentance I die, as I lived without guilt." The hymns "O Lamm Gottes unschuldig" ('Thou spotless Lamb of God') and "Wenn ich einmal soll schieden" ('When I hence must go') have a far wider influence than on acknowledged Christians only. "Finally, the world lives by the voluntary sacrificial death

of the innocent. Isaiah liii. is the right text for a sermon on the history of the world." We are compelled to say that such deeply moving words on the value of Christian ethics cannot be made to harmonise with the above-mentioned view. It bursts the framework; for the Gospel is something else, higher, deeper than, so regarded, it appeared to be. What at first seemed to be so repellent will reveal itself to the penetrating intelligence as the needful bitterness of the husk if the sweet kernel which is its life is to remain uninjured.

If now that verdict so far, when closely examined, is neither justifiable nor logical because it allows itself to be offended by that 'other-worldliness,' by the transcendence of Christian ethics, it must be just this that is the stumbling-block. And it is on this the deepest reason of their opposition rests, viz. that in the Christian faith these two things are taken in earnest—the combination of the living, personal God of holy love with the idea of 'other-worldliness.' If this transcendence is confined to the horizon of thought merely, and is regarded as solely a denial of the finite, then they will allow it to pass as an intellectual idea, and as one which is really at bottom harmless. Further, if God and man pass over into one another in pantheistic fashion and coalesce, who is there, say they, who wishes seriously to combat a poetic illustration of reality? It is different with the Christian faith in God with its pressing, (many say) its obtrusive claim on the whole life without exception and without reservation, on the whole heart, soul, and strength.

It is precisely in this aversion or aloofness from the definite Christian idea of God that we may discern the true character of the intellectual sway of that which is called by the very indefinite name of the 'modern consciousness,' so far as this name may be taken to designate anything intelligible; or, more precisely, if we wish to grasp the sense which it has in the vocabulary of the day in its relation to Christian ethics. For in a thousand respects every man now living is a 'modern man'; but the expression used with such emphasis and self-consciousness is intended to express a certain definite opinion on final questions as the only one justifiable and the only one

that is of present importance. And the more closely we troubled ourselves as to the origin and nature of this modern consciousness, the more would the above general definition seem justified. It is not the place here to ask from what sources the stream has flowed. In such a voyage of discovery of origins it would be necessary to go back to the last centuries of the mediæval period, when the human mind grew conscious of itself as antithetic to all around it; it would be necessary to follow up further all the manifold devious paths by which emancipated mind conquered the world, the secrets of the inner conscience and faith as well as the outer phenomena of discoveries and inventions. But its two main springs, the idealistic and realistic, we find at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries—the time when, after the great revolution, and the creation of a new state, without any history, in the New World, undreamt-of changes were consummated, as in a storm, on the one hand in philosophy, art, and religion, and on the other hand in physical science, technology, politics; which makes it intelligible how those who were affected by them designated their attitude ‘modern’ in a far deeper sense than former generations when referring to the times preceding them.

It is difficult for us, standing in the midst of this current, to decide whether in our estimate of these epochs and their meaning we have the right perspective. We may recognise one thing that concerns us here. This high estimate of the human mind which is likewise a note of the modern consciousness reaches back in its last roots to the word and deed of those who regarded the soul as of more value than the world. And when this is the case now there ever lives the conviction that divine sonship in the kingdom of God preserves an unsurpassable value, but only as a freely accepted gift through that much-contemned ‘grace’; while on the contrary all self-deification of the human soul is the destruction of a right estimate of life as a whole. In other words, the Christian judgment on the modern consciousness will never allow that in its deepest and best it is not of Christian origin, though now erring and straying far from home in a world which, made into a god, can never be God; it is thus that it is in its sensitiveness

for every impression full of true feeling, and still, in the midst of its infinitely increasing wealth, discontented. There therefore might be repeated all that has already been said on the evolutionary theory of ethics. For this theory is the general favourite of the modern consciousness, and not simply a form of modern ethics. So it is needful once more to bring into prominence how various are the incongruous elements of this modern consciousness. Not merely is it stronger in its negation of Christian ethics than in any lucid explanation of what it would substitute—as is in part confessed by its spokesmen in impressive terms—as, *e.g.*, Ibsen: “My task is that of inquiry; to answer is not my part.” It is more important to note that thorough-going investigators into the realities of this great world and into the deep places of human life, with their intelligence keenly alert for reality, encounter the hard facts of sin and guilt, and that not merely as an interesting problem, which for purposes of poetry or as a subject of psychical analysis cannot be dispensed with;—no, but because it awakens a desire for redemption. Thus, then, responsibility is not an explicable delusion, or a mere idea on which we may write books, in order to provide the means of discussing the subject more fully among one’s personal acquaintances; and consequently the will is not merely a compound phenomenon resolvable into nerve-irritations, but the power of moral decision in regard to something of real value. And this value reaches upward into an eternal invisible world which is beyond the twilight boundary of the visible. Let us recall some sayings of this sort:—“Upward! on to the mountain’s top, to the stars and to the great silences! —I or falsehood—one of us must yield. For himself alone there is no one. Empty space itself fill with something that resembles love!” These are of course often only very indefinite words, but the deep aspiration which is a ‘note’ of them brings us further. If this be so, surely it is possible that Christ may again become something more than a temporal deity, and His cross more than a symbol of the rejuvenescence of the forces of nature; He may as a conscience be a companion in the mill as well as on the summits of life, and not merely as a ‘vision,’ but in the actual presence of His Person.



*Line of Argument.*

According to the proverb, 'It is proper to learn from your foe,' we are confronted with the task of proving that the chief objection of the modern consciousness to Christian ethics—which is to its supernatural character—is unfounded; of demonstrating that its indissoluble union with faith in God is its greatest advantage. It would, however, not be a suitable course to take to address ourselves at once to this problem and to deal with it separately. For many do not at all acknowledge the close connection of morality and religion—that is to say, of Christian morality and Christian faith—who yet do emphasise the distinction between the moral and the natural. This is the case not merely with Kant, who, in this point, stands so close to the Christian ethical position that he is subject to the same condemnation on the part of many moderns for having broken into the 'normal moral evolution of humanity.' Briefly, the acknowledgment of an *Absolute* unites the Christian ethics with that of many of its opponents, who, however, will not admit it as supernatural in the sense of a religion; and to a certain degree this is so with all who at all speak of the 'Good,' 'the moral' in earnest. If it is shown in the long run that to be consistent they must go further, the review of their position serves likewise for the explanation of more important and more difficult ideas. And without doubt the course of proof is to a great extent common. In the main the question at issue is on the already defined principle of morals, and at its highest the notion of an absolute law (p. 12). The main point now is to consider it closely, to examine the foundation of its claim, and to invalidate the objections raised to it. In this argument everything must start from the question of *Freedom*, which was above merely mentioned (p. 19); and instead of the term 'moral law' which was also merely then mentioned, comes in that of *Conscience* not yet expounded. When this problem is solved we shall have the right basis for further examination how far morality and religion are interconnected, and why they properly belong to each other. In this second examination the first will find its conclusion. The friends of the ethics of the imperative 'Thou



shalt' will then be fully convinced that it is consistent to take a second step. And then finally we are in a position to make it clear why the adherents of Christian ethics look upon it as peerless, and that they are right even in a conviction which challenges so much.

#### CONSCIENCE AND FREEDOM.

Above all, the concept or notion of conscience demands close consideration. It has already been remarked that the question is essentially one that concerns the same main point as the nature of morals, particularly of the absolute moral law (p. 19). But not only does the notion of conscience demand the most careful investigation because it plays a very great part in the common speech of actual moral life (how frequently is conscience spoken of! how seldom the absolute moral law!); but also for the reason that by its explanation the other becomes plainer; and especially because a series of objections which it is thought may be victoriously raised against the idea of a 'conscience' makes it evident on what point the greatest force in the defence of ethics must be directed, and what it is possible to give up to attack. For this purpose it will be useful to briefly pass in review the most important theories of conscience, so that they may serve to illustrate each other, and, in the end, the decisive question may emerge.

As is so often the case, the juxtaposition of the most extreme views is illuminative. We also may find that at single points there are many bridges which afford a passage from one system to another and back again. *On the one side*, quite in accordance with a right view, as they themselves often proudly asseverate, stand the enthusiastic devotees of conscience, who cannot give it enough praise in explaining its nature, origin, and significance.

#### *Nature of Conscience.*

As to its *nature*. To those above alluded to conscience is—as to what first of all concerns its form—a clear consciousness of good and evil, accompanied by a feeling of absolute obligation, and correspondent therewith (each according to his conduct) of a feeling of pain or approval which is unique. This conscious-

ness exhibits its power in two ways. First of all, it precedes our action, in order to regulate it, commanding or forbidding. In short, it is an inner infallible guide. Secondly, it follows our action, judges it, praising or punishing, as a good or evil conscience; it is an unescapable, internal judge. How gorgeously have both these ideas been depicted in lively colours!—without at once coming to grips and passing judgment at once on this doctrine of conscience, we may say, depicted in such colours and tones as have been learnt from life; to the greatest poets an inexhaustible theme, for the simplest minds intelligible and impressive. As far as regards the content of this law-giving and judging conscience, it is considered to be essentially the same at all times and in all persons; while the Christian command of love to God and our neighbour is merely its simplest expression. Of course it is not denied that there are obscurations of this clear light. This is explained by sin. This is the cause of the waywardness of conscience, but despite this waywardness the original clearness of its witness shines forth with brightness. While such great things are affirmed of the nature of conscience, things too high could not be said of its origin. It was God's voice in men—if the thought of God must not intrude into ethical theory, then it is the voice of the pure 'practical reason' itself. Nay, many were inclined to accept a special faculty of the soul as the throne of so exalted a revelation. If we seek to know who were the sponsors of this doctrine of conscience, we must for its beginnings go back to the mixture of nationalities in the Roman Empire, at which time the anciently venerated moral ideals suffered dissolution; the old basis was changed from an outward to an inward authority. The idea of a common human nature, not fully defined, was formulated. It was to this, *e.g.*, that St Paul appealed in his mission preaching, although he exhibits no sympathy with the other proposition. These conceptions became elaborated in the theology of the Church, and attained definiteness in the Middle Ages. After becoming a part of Church teaching in connection with the idea, so widely popular, of the common natural equality of all men, this view was shattered by the Renaissance. Yet the doctrine of conscience

now gained a new significance. It became generally regarded, and is indeed still regarded by many, as the immovable foundation of morality, a basis for which no proof is requisite, and for that very reason as the principal ground of theistic belief and its weightiest evidence. The conscience witnesses of God within with far more assurance than the book of nature, and this demonstrable theism thus becomes a starting-point for the mysteries of a definite Christian faith. The law of conscience convinces of sin; the world perishes without the atonement; it is on the ground of conscience that it is reasonable to believe in redemption. A conclusion the reverse of this was drawn at the Renaissance. For it, the conscience has such a secure supremacy that the doubtful mysteries of the Christian faith may be neglected, the accusations of conscience need not be taken too seriously, and no redemption by a God-man is necessary. But for wide circles the supremacy of conscience had already been shattered. Let us fix our attention on the confessed opponents of this ethical theory so far described.

It has often been called idealistic (intuitional), while the rival theory is named the purely empirical. The distinction arises from the diverse views of the origin of conscience, and each is taken to express such a valuation of it as is grounded in its nature. Thus, on the one part there is a deep reverence for the clear, infallible law and judicial authority in our own bosom, which can only be worthily spoken of as the presence of God in men, or likewise as the most real and most inalienable, as well as the highest dignity of man—the last support of all genuine manhood. On the other part, the inclination to dethrone this royalty by casting doubt on the dignity of its origin, the clearness of its decisions and demands, the compass and power of its influence. That which seemed so simple, and self-explanatory in its simplicity, is drawn into the complex phenomena of everyday life and the vortex of history.

It is not, first of all, the purely empiristic teaching concerning conscience which now concerns us so much as its criticism of the above-mentioned intuitional theory. It is initially possible, however, that the empiricists may have weighty objections to allege against its doctrine, drawn from the ‘experience’ from

which their name is taken. Nay, we must at once acknowledge they are largely right in their criticism. The description of conscience which we have given may be derived from what is a true estimate—that a crown is at stake, in reality the moral dignity of human nature; yet the description may be inaccurate. It is possible that its advocates have forgotten that the interlacing of moral with natural (or non-moral) elements in the account of its origin, and the apparent insignificance of its kingdom, is no counter-proof of its reality, independence, and majesty. In fact, the theory does not in manifold ways accord with experience. The phenomena of conscience, formally regarded, are much more complex: imagination and judgment, impulse and fancy, frames of mind and emotions are frequently confusingly intertwined, and consequently the distinction between the antecedent pronouncement of conscience and its subsequent judgment, its hortative and warning, its accusing and approving functions, is drawn out too sharply and not accurately. For everyone knows how much there is of uncertainty in the deliverances of an evil conscience after the deed, as in its warning voice before the action. It is clear that facts contradict the assertion that conscience everywhere makes the same essential demands. Language is a plain enough witness of this when we speak of the artistic, the commercial conscience, or of the Greek, the Buddhist, the Christian moral sense. It varies also according to nationality, times, positions, and, not least of all, persons. For that I can only follow my own conscience is at the least recognised in Evangelical ethics. What a multiplicity of questions lies in a word so quickly uttered! In any case, as a matter of fact, conscience is a whole with a very varied content. And it is not sufficient to look upon sin as a sufficient cause. It may be so to a large extent; that it is not the only one is shown by any adequate apprehension of the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount, with its ‘I say unto you,’ for anyhow each of these constitutes a new commandment. If thus the nature of conscience is not accurately described, still less is its origin properly accounted for. Finally, we have no interest in defending it merely on the ground of the importance of this doctrine; especially since



history has shown that, once a weapon in the armoury of Christian belief, it can just as easily be used for controverting it. Still it is worth remembering that the design of the theory and its main principle may be right, even although its detailed elaboration is sacrificed to its foes. The theory advanced by these opponents is just as little, yea, still less, satisfactory.

It is summed up in the idea that the so-called phenomena of conscience are illusory and are temporarily essential for the advancement of mankind on the path of its development. With a true insight into their origin they will slowly disappear. As a concession to facts it is openly allowed that, at present (merely in relation to the present and for the consciousness of the individual), there is a difference between what is good and useful and what is hurtful and evil. But it is merely losing your way in a *cul-de-sac*, it is said, to stop short at the consciousness of the individual and suppose that in this way conscience can be understood. We must go deep down into the secrets of history. This teaches<sup>1</sup> us murder was originally merely an injury; it was education and heredity that made it wicked. This transformation was completed in even greater degree and with constantly increasing refinement. Out of little particles of conscience, so to speak, larger masses have been formed, until finally you get the immense, mighty whole of conscience. So the blood-feud was weakened to compensation made to the injured neighbour, then paid to the next-of-kin. This compensation was changed to legal punishment, and so on to the elaborated and detailed system of jurisprudence of our present civilisation. However the judgments of praise or blame on the part of conscience arose, they will disappear with the explanation of its origin. It has, we are assured, done no essential mischief, and even so far accomplished some little good; after a sufficient space of time it will pass away until the deep-rooted prejudice disappears from every mind. Others, again, explained this history of conscience less by a natural and necessary evolution than as a result of conscious design. Conscience is a powerful instrument, now for the strong and now for the weak, and the elimination of conscience a condition of human advance

<sup>1</sup> Paley has a famous passage in his *Moral Philosophy* to the same effect.—TR.

to a higher stage. But in the present connection this distinction is of little importance.

Is this type of doctrine of conscience, resting on the experience to which it makes appeal, justifiable? We do not need to seek for an answer direct from the Christian standpoint. It is, at least in part, at once given to us by those who, in crucial points, stand closer to it than its definitively Christian exponents. First let us hear what they have to allege against this theory of conscience, and then see what they would put in its place. If there then remains an unsatisfactory residuum, we shall once more have to resume our search; and conscience under such varied illumination, showing ever more clearly its greatness, cannot but exhibit to us the determining issues on which all assurance with respect to it depends. It is plain that those who place conscience so low and make it merely a transitory illusion have not taken sufficiently careful note of its operations. It is certainly easily intelligible that certain rules of action which originated in reflection on that which may be beneficial or detrimental, have been impressed by teachers on the rising generation, or by the guide on those he leads, without their having any consciousness of the ground on which such rules rest. It is an undeniable fact that the human will can be largely influenced. Nay, indubitably this phenomenon of history has often been of the greatest importance. These stages in the formation of conscience may have happened in the manifold way depicted by some, *e.g.* the repression of blood-feud may be to a great extent founded on its injurious consequences. The real problem, however, would be to show how, through education, habit, heredity, such rules of behaviour have so become a part of our conscience as to give rise to that form of consciousness we experience when we are speaking of 'our conscience.' It is admitted by those who thus solve the problem of conscience that it is a different experience which we have when we say this action is 'good,' than when we are content with the judgment that it is beneficial, or when we simply act in accordance with the rules which have been impressed on us, or do something because it has become to us a self-explanatory habit. Therefore the most peculiar feature of the operation of conscience

is not explained, namely, the fact that I ascribe to the resolves of conscience a pre-eminent value in comparison with all reflections on use, law, custom, and appreciate my own worth according as I have obeyed or disobeyed the monition of conscience. Now, what is it in this feeling of worthiness or unworthiness which depends on my accord with my conscience or my disagreement with it?

This problem many now attack in good earnest who in their judgment do not only yield the palm to that theory first above mentioned, but generally speaking remain in close alliance with it :—I mean those who unite the idealistic or intuitional with the empiristic interpretation of conscience, giving greater weight to the latter element. They say that the phenomena of conscience cannot be explained as a transitory illusion; they are rather a permanent and highly important means for the realisation of the moral end. While they agree on this matter, they, of course, separate when they come to the interpretation of conscience; and general differences, such as we have encountered as existing between hedonistic and evolutionary ethics, as well as transitions from one view to the other, are here met with in the actual treatment (p. 24). Sometimes the conscience is considered as an abiding and indispensable means for the furtherance of the general well-being; sometimes as a step forward in the development of the individual; and, in an especial manner, for the evolution of human beings as a whole. The first group sees the final reason and justification of the phenomena of conscience in the carefully calculated utility which rules of action sanctioned by conscience and protected by a peculiar inviolability have for the general well-being. By the reflections which thus arise, this group sees itself necessitated to accept the thought of original moral feelings of self-respect and benevolence which assert themselves in actual experience and which we call conscience. Besides this, they silently borrow something from the ideas of the second group, and willingly speak of the gradual spread of such feelings through the whole mass of mankind. It is, of course, obviously much more natural for this second group not only strongly to emphasise at the outset the existence of such higher feelings, such ideal feelings,

but especially to lay stress on the supremacy of the collective over the individual will, so that it is the former that carries out in the latter whatever is of 'value.'

On this latter assumption the objection that, by this theory, the most important element in conscience is wholly disregarded, does at the least disappear. It does thus recognise an absolute value realised by the mysterious might of the collective will. So far as the individual will is consentient to the collective will the agent experiences a unique moral advance in life, which we all know when we follow conscience, and a blighting condemnation when we have resisted it. Resisted—we use the expression involuntarily. The adherents of this doctrine of conscience also employ the expression. But can it be justified? Is not conscience too strong, too personal, too conscious of freedom for those explanations? Or, in another way the operation of conscience is more closely *noted* than in the above—the feeling of absolute value is recognised, but yet not completely, not in its whole depth. It is not exhausted in speaking of the achievement of absolute value by the will, or perhaps saying that disinterested actions, in distinction from those that are self-regarding, give a permanent satisfaction, and that this is the reason of its victory in the battle of the inner life. Due regard must be paid to the idea that the will *intends* to decide for what is of absolute value—that it recognises this value in a personal decision. It is only when this feeling of freedom is recognised that the life of the conscience is completely described. This is not yet the assertion that there is such a thing as 'moral freedom,' which is a proposition that must first be proven. Still, the feelings of freedom belong to the complete description of the phenomenon to be proved. We merely ask for the present: May not the difficulties by which this idea of freedom are complicated arise from the reason that our inspection breaks off before we get quite to the end? And is it not further possible that the disinclination, often scarcely disguised, to the idea of conscience at all arises from a cause which is at bottom the complexity of the idea of freedom?

In order to get a clear answer we have to contemplate the facts of conscience still closer; in doing this we are brought to



the theory which is a combination of the empiristic (or intuitional) with the idealistic, in which now the latter element is predominant. And first of all as the *form* of the phenomenon rather than its content. The simplest introspection may prove to everyone that an evil conscience after the deed is far away the clearest deliverance of conscience, and so, according to the above-mentioned terminology of the old doctrine, is the judicial, retrospective conscience. Next to this in order of clearness is the judgment, 'You ought not to do that,' before the action, and so is the prospective, monitory conscience. So undeniably do these experiences stand in the foreground, and as a matter of fact the first in front of the second, that ethical philosophers of importance will not recognise the so-called sanctioning conscience at all; a good conscience is for them only the absence of an evil one. Who is there who never knew that feeling of great, of unique joy which makes its appearance after a right resolve, especially if it has cost a struggle? and even before the resolve, who has not heard that quiet, true voice which as by the presence of a friend or of a father blesses us with a feeling of home-like security so long as the readiness to follow it prevails? But such recollections are indeed a witness that the most urgent tone of conscience is, 'You ought to have done differently.' This presupposed, we can in the operations of conscience distinguish three relations. The first essentially concerns the world of imagination. In the imagination of a specific fact (whether of ideas, words, deeds is here indifferent) there is associated the imagination of its opposite. Thus with the cognition of the way in which we have acted there is associated the relative idea of how we ought to have acted; on the other hand, when we are on the point of acting we have the idea of how we ought not to act, and the converse how we ought to act. The Priest and the Levite "passed by on the other side." Now, if the thought of this conduct of either of them occurred to them again, perhaps quite undesired, possibly whilst being admired in Jerusalem for pious deeds of charity; close by the image of himself hastening away for safety, each sees another in which he is stopping to afford succour to the wounded man. *Vice versa*, the Samaritan, alongside the picture of how he saves

his neighbour, sees another of how he might have taken care of himself. Similarly, when we put ourselves into the required situations we find that it is not ~~after the fact~~ but before the action that this feeling arises; that is to say, with our imagination of a completed action that of the contrary possibility invariably associates itself. The *second* part of this phenomenon of conscience belongs essentially to the emotional nature. That feeling of pleasure or displeasure repeatedly to be mentioned which is so peculiar, and even unique, associates itself with the imagination of an action past or future; it cleaves right closely to it, but it is all the same independent of it in so far as its consequences in relation to the external world are concerned. Its consequences in relation to the agent by which he feels his self-respect injured or helped, confirmed or denied, vivified or blighted are related to self alone—but this ‘self alone’ is everything (p. 16). The Samaritan staked his life, and in so doing gained a life that is worthy of being so called. The Priest and the Levite saved their life and lost it. Many specifics for this deepest of all ills have been discovered, praised, used. Immense efforts have been directed to this end. It remains unattainable as long as there is a ‘conscience’ which even when it slumbers spontaneously wakes up again. Evangelical ethics stands on the conviction that it is aware of the way which alone can be taken save at the expense of conscience, which does not lull it to sleep but makes it keener. But what is the most painful thing in this feeling of smart? Here on this second characteristic of the nature of the processes of conscience there appears a third which is in this connection of the most importance. Those before mentioned are recognised by the above-named exponents of conscience; but the one now to be mentioned is a burning question in the decisive contest. It belongs to the sphere of *Will*. This is the mystery of the world. Every action is my own. My ‘ego’ cannot declare itself as something separate from its own doings. If this were otherwise, it would be utterly impossible to speak in any strict sense of a recognition of an absolute law if this recognition was an independent something outside the purview of the will. We are now evidently at the point which was above seen from a distance. All the ways of

regarding the subject run up into the great questions of responsibility and freedom.

Before we expound these we must complete our consideration of the way in which the conscience asserts itself in experience by expressly mentioning that only the great common marks should be brought into prominence, for the experiences of human consciences are as indefinitely numerous as individual men, both as regards their original and acquired strength, bias and composition of their mental faculties. And for the sake of clearness a single operation of conscience has been considered, while in actual life it is just that bent of mind which is formed of the individual phenomena which is of the greatest importance. We may reflect on the pathetic picture of a human being burdened by the ceaseless pressure of conscience; or on the inspiring vision of the peace of conscience which we see embodied in Jesus. Then the misconception scarcely needs to be averted that, in that which has been advanced, we maintain the existence in all cases of an equal functional endowment of conscience. It is rather in the battle of life, in the inconceivably manifold chances and changes of life, that the individual is led to such experiences. But certainly this is on the basis of a definite groundwork of the complex interaction of thoughts, feelings, and exercises of will-power which is marked by the presentiment of some absolute value for which it is bound to decide.

Finally, a brief reference may again be made as to the content of judgments of conscience. Christian ethics has no cause whatever to belittle in this the immense influence of history; it sees in Christ in 'the fulness of time' the express image of God; it believes in the living God, who as the God of order gradually realises in time His eternal counsel. What it must needs desire in reference to content are those ideal feelings which, as we saw, are discerned as soon as our reflection on these fundamental moral problems goes deep enough.

This whole examination of conscience ought to serve to closely define that one main subject to which any justification of Christian ethics is compelled conformably with the subject to direct itself; namely, to that uncompromising 'Thou shalt'

which is a stumbling-block to the modern consciousness, and which many will yet not sacrifice, who still definitely share with Christian ethics a belief in the other great stumbling-block of this consciousness, the union of morality with religion. At present we are plainly enough cured of that delusion, once and still widely spread, that conscience is in itself an unambiguous whole, quite clear in itself; even requiring no proof; in a position to bear the whole edifice of morality. On the contrary, we are compelled to confess that the examination of conscience calls forth many difficult questions which tend to shatter the validity of morality and have been actually used for that very purpose, *e.g.* the largely changing content of conscience. But we have surely found more than this. Not indeed an impregnable rock, but a fact which, the more we investigate it the more does it appear to be worthy of justification, which the more entirely we let it pass for just what it is does it also show what it is that is in need of justification, and gives such a determining element as is demanded for this purpose—namely, that imperative ‘Thou shalt’ in its full sense, or that absolute moral law. And indeed it is such imperative in this inseparable combination with the consciousness of personal moral freedom the neglect of which appeared to us as a defect in so many investigations of conscience. Our immediate task is to find a foundation for the moral law, and with it at the same time for that which is inseparable from it, moral freedom. Still more. Even the method of a possible foundation is already suggested to us. The question is not as to the explanation of the moral law and freedom in the sense that we would show from what causes our subjection to the moral law arises. That would be self-contradictory, provided that this subjection is a fact of our freedom. It is rather our task to show what significance, for the individual and for mankind, such a moral law only effectuating itself in freedom possesses, and then how the objections raised against this idea of freedom can be overcome.



## FREEDOM.

We may begin either with the moral law or freedom. But the idea of freedom is so great an offence to the modern consciousness that whatever we may choose to say about the significance of personal sacrifice for the 'good' is either not listened to, or receives a false interpretation, so long as the antagonistic bias against freedom is not destroyed. By this course what we have to say on the meaning of the imperative 'Thou shalt' comes into a clearer light. We recognise that the simple idea to which this justification amounts is only capable of proof according to the nature of the subject, and in all simplicity.

It is self-evident that we must first of all say exactly what we understand by the 'freedom' which we wish to secure against objections. There is, however, a still more immediate problem. The whole difficulty, that is, would fall away altogether if a proof were gained that we have no compelling reason to speak of freedom merely on account of that imperative 'Thou shalt.' Shortly put, *is there a necessary connection between responsibility and freedom?* In our doctrine of conscience (p. 72) it appeared that, if the will of the agent is not recognised as final and decisive, we have no exhaustive account of the real phenomenon. It appeared to us to be insufficient to emphasise the feeling of the obligation of the moral law, the absolute imperative 'Thou shalt,' and its unique inner effect, according as we submit to it or not; rather were we led on to the thought of responsibility in the strict sense there spoken of, how it includes the idea of actual freedom, not merely the idea of "an agent acting under the impression of freedom." But we are always again hearing the decided assertion: it is precisely when responsibility is completely recognised that there is no possibility of freedom open; it is only the denier of freedom who can speak of responsibility. For when freedom is assumed, where is the 'subject,' 'the person' whose personality and whose actions can be judged? As he is free to act in any way at any moment, a person with a 'free will' would be incapable of feeling responsible for his actions; in such a complete indeterminateness there is no action of which he could affirm, It is my own; there

would be no tree able to bring forth fruit; this uncertainty in his resolves is the antithesis of responsibility. Teachers, for example, have on the instigation of this self-same idea declared that their art would founder on this unknown free will incapable of the influence of motives, which never offers to another a firm hold on which it is possible to trust, and with which we can reckon. We are compelled to have regard to these and similar objections if in what is hereafter said we are to understand what freedom means. We see from them that this notion can be defined contradictorily and confusedly in reference to the idea of responsibility on account of which that of freedom is asserted. But as to the truth of the proposition that freedom and responsibility are mutually exclusive, unfavourable judgment in regard to it is awakened by the circumstance that cool writers, intelligent and sober, grow excited over it. Probably they find it necessary thus to strengthen their faith in their assertion that it is an absolutely necessitated, determined will that alone can feel responsible for its actions—these not being really its own doings, but mere ‘happenings’ to it. For how, it is asked, can the following propositions be refuted? We cannot be considered accountable for action in which our consciousness of personal agency is suspended. Organic existence is a slow process of evolution ending in man. The consequences of this are: ‘I’ was born with this or that character, and had such and such guardians, teachers, instructors. Teaching and example operated just according to the relation which I—this product of evolution—bore to them. And it has thus come to pass that I at this moment have this feeling of compassion or that of delight at another’s misfortune. The whole of the cosmic process must have run another course for me to have any other different feeling in ever so small a degree. And just so, that I now speak thus with reference to freedom and responsibility is necessitated, and if the reader is not convinced it is equally a matter of necessity. When I say, ‘I will write,’ or ‘I will not allow myself to be convinced,’ I act also under this law of necessity. Any such resolve of the will is a necessarily determined action—determined by the sum-total of all causes and effects. Now, we cannot be considered accountable for action

thus arising in which consciousness of personal agency is suspended (Rée). This is refreshing clearness. Of course it is said in order to lessen the impression produced by this clearness—so says the materialist; but the modern monist is not involved in this consequence. He says, if we only recognise the uniqueness of this mental (psychical) process, and its inexplicability on grounds merely naturalistic, *i.e.* mechanical, and its complete inner unity, *i.e.* its empirical character (see below), then the strongest determinism, the conviction of the absolutely necessitated nature of all such psychical phenomena, is quite compatible with a recognition of responsibility and accountability, as also of guilt and repentance, of the evil and the good conscience—nay, renders these facts intelligible. Mere shifts! For the question at issue is not at all as to the different modes of its activity, whether it is mechanical or psychical causation, but whether that activity is necessitated. But if it should be said that the result of voluntary action, precisely described, is determined by psychical causes as distinguished from mechanical activities, while it is not contained in these causes and is the production of something new (Wundt), then the dreaded idea of freedom which had just been ceremoniously dismissed is modestly allowed to enter by a side door. For surely a determined result arising from precisely determined causes is contained in those very causes. Such attempts are consequently proofs of the fact that the proposition is justifiable when it is affirmed that responsibility and freedom are indissolubly associated. It is thus no more than a mere oracular utterance when we are told that we ought not to say, ‘I could have acted differently,’ and also, ‘I could not have acted differently,’ but simply, ‘I am not the person I ought to be.’ This is the continual effort to disguise the real point, and while strongly emphasising, ‘I was under obligation to act so or thus,’ that is, ‘I was bound’ to veil or forget to note the corresponding proposition, ‘I was to blame for acting differently from what I ought’; which is to say, ‘I was the originator of action which might have been differently performed by me.’ Now it is on this latter in connection with the former, and not merely on the first alone, that the feeling of responsibility depends. Assent

to the actual state of the case is more easily obtained if we make it quite clear that it is by no means the same thing to recognise the intimate connection between responsibility and freedom, and to recognise that these two intimately connected concepts really denote some actual reality and are not merely illusory. Of the nature of freedom we are not now treating, but insisting on this connection, and that he who recognises responsibility must affirm freedom as well. And for this the greatest antagonist of freedom gives a quite unexpected witness. To think of "the feeling of responsibility," says Schopenhauer, "for what we do, our accountability for our actions, without self-contradiction, without allowing: 'I can do what I will,' *i.e.* without freedom, passes my power of comprehension." Since, then, Schopenhauer must in denying freedom deny responsibility, he denies the latter only for this world of space and time, and takes refuge in a freedom which is independent of this world as is its final reason. Whether this idea is not self-contradictory is not now our question; but merely the confession of the greatest antagonist of freedom is to us of importance, that the sacrifice of freedom can only be made by the sacrifice of responsibility.

It is still possible for the objection to be raised that Christian ethics ought to be very cautious (as it has so far happened) about entering the lists for freedom, since surely St Paul and all the Reformers have borne witness to the great might of grace and to the helplessness of the human will. Luther, *e.g.*, says: "If anyone affirms that it passes his understanding how to reconcile the omnipotence of God and the moral freedom of men," he answers, "It passes my comprehension too"; that is to say, our Reformers have recognised the relation of grace to freedom in the strict sense as an impenetrable mystery, without casting aside either the one or the other. Calvin, *e.g.*, maintained both that Adam fell because God so ordained it, and that Adam fell by his own fault. But many now appeal to the Reformers who are not able to recognise the fact of freedom, and so regard guilt ultimately as an illusion.

But what do we understand by the freedom which it is purposed to justify against its foes? The path to an answer is so far indicated to us by what has been said, and what it is can



now be in all respects made unmistakable. It is not for any and every reason, but for the sake of responsibility, that our freedom is important. Therefore at the outset it is to us very much a matter of indifference what has been maintained of the nature of freedom. It is indifferent that it is sometimes too much and sometimes too little, because, as often happens in such cases, that which is too much is where the real issue is concerned, too little, and *vice versa*. We already know that the freedom we mean is not the capability of deciding at any moment for any conceivable, especially for one of two antagonistic possibilities without motive. Our opponents are very willing to saddle us with this notion, in order to show that it is impossible to speak of the responsibility of a will so indeterminate, capable of any transformation at any second, which so conceived cannot be regarded as a 'will' at all. Because we grant this at once, those pictures, all more or less humorous, of a will which finds its historically famous type in the domestic friend with the grey coat who died of hunger between trusses of hay, because, in a complete state of indecision, he was incapable of adventuring his motionless tongue on either of them, do not affect us at all. It is more important to delimit the freedom of moral resolve against the 'too little,' against the assertion of mere self-activity or spontaneity, absence of external incentive, while at the same time it is maintained that compulsion, necessity as to the inner course of our presentations, emotions, volitions, is just as complete as in the movement of the heavenly bodies. Clear, conscious reflection and voluntary determination may be at the same time emphasised in strong expressions: still stronger is the appearance that it is the real freedom that is confessed (for which we are concerned) when reference is made to the fact that this psychical or intellectual freedom (as it is called) is developed in the life of the individual, that the immature child does not possess it, nor an imbecile, because it is inseparable from the clear self-consciousness which can alone present to the mind its entire rich content. But this self-consciousness itself is conceived of as a completely determined unit, just as determined as the external world with which it stands in a nexus

of causation; and accordingly reflection and decision are necessarily determined, however much they present themselves to our consciousness in the forms of our psychical life as our very own. We have the feeling that we ourselves determine, but in reality we are determined. We think that we act; in reality we are acted upon through and through. Certainly this psychical freedom is the necessary presupposition of moral freedom; we do not ascribe the latter to the immature or to the imbecile, because they do not possess the former. But psychical freedom is not the same as moral freedom. What is the difference between them? No more and no less, we maintain, than what is essential to preserve the integrity of responsibility undiminished. And that is the power to submit to, or to resist, an intelligible 'ought'; to say yes or no when a moral command, that is, an absolute demand, is made on the decision of the ego. Then, moreover, we really understand (as has been already so frequently affirmed) to some degree, perhaps, why it is that obedience or disobedience to a categorical imperative, an absolute command, has as its consequence generally a special feeling of pleasure or displeasure; but not its whole uniqueness, not why I must stand alone as the doer of the deed, and in the case of transgression know myself guilty, and find the keenest sting of guiltiness in this feeling that I was not under compulsion, but could have done differently, instead, finally, of being able to console myself with the reflection that somehow I was subjected to a fate and to cruel necessity. If we define moral freedom—which, taken as an isolated expression, is of varied connotation—thus: 'I can will what I will: I can will what *ought* to be but not what *must* be nor even what *can* be: I can begin a new series starting with my volition—it is to be understood in the assigned sense. But it is essential to examine more in detail the point at issue into which all such concepts run up, which, put in brief form, are so easily misunderstood.

Our opponents, for instance, think that their game is an easy one when they point out that all action is determined by motives, and that the advocate of freedom ignores this most certain of all psychological facts. By this assertion they condemn him for a mistake which he has not at all committed,

The acknowledged moral imperative is without doubt a motive, and even conceivably the strongest of all: we know at once the majesty of the 'ought' and the unparalleled self-condemnation with which it threatens us: we know also that it is no tyrant which demands blind obedience, but a monarch whose service is freedom—our true life, which is alone worth living. But the question is whether the force of this motive is only felt according to the determined character, training, habit of the agent (according, that is, to his empirical character) on the one hand, or according to external circumstances on the other hand; or whether the agent has the power residing within himself to give to that motive a strengthened force, the preponderance over all those resisting inclinations and impulses which are the product of the above-mentioned factors; whether he has merely the power to maintain and develop himself as he is, in his given nature, or to renounce and deny that given nature in order that by the death of the natural Self he may gain his true life. Differently expressed: there is of course no action without its motive; but the question is how the determination of motive arises and how *one* becomes the decisive factor. The more plainly a moral action comes to the focus of consciousness, the more clearly is it seen that the final motive is the absolute imperative in the recognition of which we reach our true destiny. But with this, with this consciousness of an intelligible main motive, there is associated the feeling of freedom, the feeling that we allow it to prevail as a main motive because we so resolved without compulsion; the feeling that we have given it the predominance over other motives in doing what we could have done otherwise. Our opponents unwittingly bear witness that the experience is rightly described in such sentences by resorting to hyperbole, and speak, *e.g.*, of the strengthening of the motive by the agents, or praise their obedience to the moral imperative as if they could have acted differently. The totality of the circumstances (they say) are of course not in our power; but all the more earnestly ought we to attend to those factors of moral activity which are in our power; we ought to apply ourselves to strengthen moral motive as far as possible; to transform our individuality, and the like. This sort of

demand—understood as an unbiassed reader will understand it—says just what we have above asserted. But shall we not say: Why their illusive speeches? For what is the real meaning when it is said: ‘We ought to strengthen motive as much as possible,’ and silently think: ‘but that is impossible’; or, ‘We ought to pay serious attention to the factors which are in our control,’ and silently think as well: ‘Those on which the matter really hinges, are, however, not in our power.’ In the sense which has been now precisely delimited, the advocates of freedom should openly admit even the expression ‘freedom of choice’; no cheap sneer ought to restrain us, or else there will ever be an ambiguity. In the moment of moral resolve he who makes the decision is “not under the compulsion of any external or internal circumstances as by an irrefragable necessity to affirm a determined possibility, but he decides independently for one of the various possibilities” (Sigwart).

In this place again we are justified in declining all exaggerations, even those which emerge in the recognition of the correct principle that freedom is solely maintained for the sake of responsibility, and is consequently but the freedom of moral resolve. Even to this there is often granted a greater extension than is compatible with experience, just because the idea of responsibility is extended further than its nature permits. There is not only no such thing as responsibility in the strict sense for the actions of another, except so far as they may have been conditioned by my free act or have become my own; but also that is an exaggeration as unavoidable as it is dangerous that I am responsible in the full sense for every one of my own actions, and accordingly free in respect of it. Christian ethics especially has no need whatever to depreciate what its greatest exponents have said on the slavery of the natural will, and of the curse of evil action which must beget fresh evil, and just as little of its boast of its life in the Spirit, of its joy in the Good. Nay, still further, no single moral resolve is made by a naked ego, void of content, but by a personality already determined—determined in all stages on the side of evil and of good. It is impossible for any formula to include the wealth of life in this respect. The art of the poet embodies for us



some surprising and especially attractive cases; but life is richer than the greatest art. In the Christian doctrine of sin, especially of 'offences,'<sup>1</sup> we shall have to recollect this. As to how much responsibility, and correspondently how much freedom in the sense above defined, each person has, no individual Christian, according to the testimony of St Paul, is in a position to pass an impartial judgment on himself. The most penetrating self-judgment finds its issue in the word: "He that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. iv. 3). Nevertheless, a moral judgment on the character of others as of ourselves lies on the assumption that somehow, at some time and under some sort of circumstances, everyone is responsible, and on that account on the whole free—this much-misemployed word so understood as to mean that he by his own resolve can accept or reject the intelligible moral imperative. Granted, as we must later be convinced, that the most important act of freedom is the acceptance of the divine work of redemption (inclusive of all the preparations for it) which frees the enslaved will, then all that is so far adduced is valid, and that in the plainest possible way.

However cautiously the idea of freedom may be circumscribed and bounded, not merely for the sake of antagonists, but for its own sake, it still offers sufficient opportunity for attack. How are we to set in order the most important arguments against freedom, in order to put them to the proof? It is said there can be no freedom; the assumption violates a law of thought. And it is said there is none; for facts are against it. Which objection is the more terrifying? It appears to be the first, so far as it excludes from the circle of those with whom we can seriously treat the advocates of freedom, whatever one may say as to facts. It appears to be the second, for facts are irrefutable. But possibly the question is as to facts which are only dangerous on a fixed interpretation, and perhaps the unthinkableness is too hastily affirmed just because other facts are not allowed their due weight, but are too hastily interpreted in harmony with an apparently self-intelligible idea.

<sup>1</sup> 'Offences' in the sense of leading others into sin, as in St Matt. xviii. 6, 7, and parallels. See below, pp. 88, 150.

Let us begin with facts. Two groups require notice: special and surprising facts of statistics of morality, of hypnotism, of heredity; and general facts observable in every psychical process. Let us put the last first. For, supposing the reasons can be given *why we think we are free to act*; supposing freedom can be proved to be an illusion, then the whole question is settled. No one torments himself with a mysterious process when it is shown that it contains no mystery. Possibly this is also the case with regard to the feeling of freedom. The assertion is not sufficient that our feeling of freedom is essentially more unassailable than any other fact (Lichtenberg). And really many believe that they can show how the illusion of freedom arises. With more acumen and brevity than others Schopenhauer has attempted to give this proof. He shows that the question ought to be put precisely thus: Can I will, what I will? Not: Can I do what I will? It is obvious that the latter may be affirmed; but the affirmation is valueless, for how can a voluntary agent do any other than he wills? But that the first is to be denied, viz. that we can will what we will, or freely and of ourselves bring about a decision as between two possible courses. This Schopenhauer endeavours to establish by a close analysis of the so-called free action, namely, by an analysis of motives. His picture of the holiday-maker who reflects on the possibilities of his free decision is famous. "I can—he possibly says to himself—either go a walk or I can go to my club, or from the top of a tower admire the sunset, can go to the theatre, visit a friend, can run off to the city gate and never return; but none of that will I do, but I will voluntarily go home to my wife." That is, says Schopenhauer, as if the water in the pond spoke and said: "I can go into the waves as high as a house—yea, into the stormy sea; I can go rapidly down—yea, in the stream; I can tumble spurtling from the height—yea, in a waterfall; I can mount up freely into the air—yea, in the fountain; I can pass off into steam—yea, at 80° Réaumur; but none of that will I do, but I shall remain quietly in the crystal pond." That is, that 'can' is never present as an actual thing, unless quite definite causes are present; but then that is just the same as necessity. Precisely so with the man

with his evening off. The motives which he can present to himself for the one or the other conclusion—for the walk, or the theatre, or the home-going—are not a whit less compulsory than the mechanical causes which keep the water in the pond or raise it in the air, or boil it into steam. The difference between internal motives and external causes is only that those are thoughts which we imagine to ourselves in the form of reflection one after another. This is the one chief cause of the illusion of freedom, viz. our failing insight into the compulsory power of motives. The other lies in our not knowing precisely the second factor in the calculation, or at least only gradually learning to know it, namely, the determined mental habitude, the determined bias of the will—the ‘empirical character’—on which those motives light, which is itself formed by disposition, education, habit. According to the difference in the bias of the will, will be the difference of the impression made by these motives; but always an absolutely necessary one. Accordingly, if in the above example of reflection the person saw a denier of freedom standing by, he would apply himself possibly to giving a demonstration of freedom instead of going home or to the theatre. But this would only be the case if the idea of refuting the foe of freedom was for his mental habitude a stronger motive than those motives which should plead for the other possibilities: absolutely necessary is the resolve also in this as in all other cases. It is not always that we are able to complete the calculation, because, in thinking retrospectively of a decision made, we cannot name all the motives in their order of strength, nor the several items which made up at that moment our empirical character; but the imperfection of the calculation is, it is said, no ground for denying the daylight clearness of the idea.

Now, as far as the idea is as clear as daylight we have already recognised it and used it in order to make plain the nature of moral freedom (p. 80). That motives may operate like mechanical forces as causes is indubitable, and the recollection of the effects of a cry of ‘Fire!’ in a crowded theatre is merely a clear illustration. We have further emphasised that no resolve can happen without operating motives; nor forgotten

that these likewise owe their different methods of exhibition to the disposition of the individual. Nor have we underestimated the importance of the empirical character. And this so little that we should have nothing to object to in the example given, if it were made complete by the inclusion of a moral action in the strict sense. Suppose in the course of reflection on the holiday occasion referred to, instead of the continual series of pleasant alternatives, there was the case of a poor invalid some distance outside the city to be visited, involving an unpleasant renunciation of all enjoyment of the off evening, then we would consider our philosopher right if he said: If he goes to the invalid friend, then the moral motive of compassion becomes the strongest for him because that emotion is grounded in his character; and another person with other innate or acquired bias of will would just as certainly not visit the sick. But Schopenhauer's whole statement could only suffice as a proof against freedom if it were already proved that the decision in favour of one motive in preference to the other is excluded, which even our opponents from their point of view, with their contradictory hyperbolic utterances, are grudgingly inclined to recognise as the really decisive constituent of our personal experience (p. 82). And we may once more refer to the fact that it is just the most acute antagonist of freedom who is not finally content with that reply. That is, so soon as the feeling of responsibility is brought into the question, he says that responsibility without freedom is quite beyond his comprehension. Accordingly he betakes himself to the shift of a timeless freedom (p. 80). The circumstantial exposition now considered, which has been so often admired and often repeated with less of grace, is therefore only a little drama, which for a while, like dazzling fireworks, makes you forget how deep is the darkness in which this most ancient of problems, that of freedom, still remains. What we do gain is a deeper insight into the nature of the psychological processes with which a free resolve is involved. It is not shown that there is no such thing. The facts admit another interpretation, and even demand it, unless responsibility is to be a mere empty delusion. The force of motives in their connection with the



already existent bias of will may be fully recognised, and yet we may assert that the ego can carry the motive of the moral imperative against all other motives and in opposition to the existent character, if it were only in single moments; if it were only then perhaps when, as the Christian says, the gracious will of God lays hold on the human will.

Are the other facts which are said to contradict freedom of more force? They contradict on a whole only a notion of freedom arbitrarily set up, and do not reject as unintelligible that which for the sake of the moral life alone is dear to us. The inheritance of certain dispositions, and in fact heredity in all departments of the psychical life, Christian ethics can fully accept, as well as the influences of human society and of external circumstances. How much more difficult or easier the battle of morality may be for one in comparison with his neighbour can only be imperfectly determined by themselves or by their immediate earthly judges. That they, despite all other weights, can of themselves cast another weight into the scale the feeling of responsibility convinces them precisely when they allow it its due force, without exaggeration and without concealment; and where they are in doubt they appeal to the omniscient. Also the much-vaunted calculations of statistics of morality are not in need of any sort of clever manipulation. They do give valuable peeps into the power of social circumstances, the interlacing relations of all with all who have been previously or contemporaneously similarly situated; therefore into the significance of the world and of 'offence' in the sense of the Holy Scriptures. The tabulated statistics, which exhibit for great groups and spaces of time a similar number of crimes, would only be a proof against the freedom of the will if they comprehended such actions as were carried into execution in like situations by a like number of men, *i.e.* in equally great temptation (want, power of resistance, etc.), and an equal number of external occasions for the crimes in question. It is clear that this cannot be asserted in reference to the mere figures of cases lumped together. Lately, hypnotism has often been vaunted as a proof against freedom. It was curious when, from the theological side, joy was loudly expressed that, through this

influence on the soul-life, drunkards hitherto irreclaimable could be 'converted.' It was not less curious when doctors believed that they could now at last give the death-blow to the idea of freedom. Both ought to have been aware that that sort of phenomenon only sums up facts little known before or regarded, of the way in which the influence of another's will may make itself felt, and nothing more.

### *Causality and Freedom.*

The only really formidable antagonist of the freedom of the will is not any fact. Facts are only adverse by the impugnable interpretation set on them. It is rather the uninterrupted cohesion of all reality, *i.e.* the idea of universal causality. It has been possible to come to an understanding so far in regard to all other objections, and we do come across many utterances which go further in the way of reconciliation than logical consistency allows (p. 82). But in the rear of all these objections there stands that which is derived from causality, which is supposed fatal to all explanation. "If there were freedom," says Schopenhauer, "the intellect would cease its activity at the moment of its acquirement, for causality as a law is the commonest 'form' of the thinking faculty." "There can be no freedom; a causeless occurrence, an occurrence not adequately grounded, is a contradiction in terms."

When our opponents call causality a law of thought, what they mean to say is: Thought is unable to conceive of any reality otherwise than that—as a necessary effect of its causes, and in turn a cause of fresh necessary effects—it is an absolutely determined whole in the uninterrupted cohesion of all reality. It is then self-evident that there can be no free actions. Or, to put it in other words, they make what is unthinkable the same thing as the inexplicable, and have in this intelligible way renounced freedom. But is it correct to say that causality thus understood is a law of our thinking? This much only is correct, that without understanding it in this sense any knowledge having a constraining force for a sound mind, *i.e.* any empirically scientific knowledge reducible to universal propositions, is impossible. That is to say, this interpretation of

causality is not an axiom of thought but a postulate in our search for the uninterrupted correlation of our knowledge (Sigwart, *Logic*, ii. 21).

Of course so powerful is the impression of the causal nexus in the kingdom of nature, and at the same time so intimately intertwined with our inner moral life, that this admission that the idea of free determination is not unreasonable will always seem a mere empty possibility to him who has not arrived at a clear idea of the importance of such freedom. For indeed the recognition of this freedom finally involves nothing less than that the whole knowledge of nature, however firmly compact and irrefragable, does not embrace all that really exists; nor even in its own department all that actually is, in all its respects—not, that is, in the whole depth of its reality; that there is still another world beyond that which we can reckon and measure, even the world of freedom, which exhibits itself as transcendent. In other words, the recognition of freedom is the rejection of the monism of which the modern consciousness is so proud (p. 46). This is a price which only he will pay who recognises the surpassing value for which it is not too high a price. Above this strong law of causality in the given sense there is a stronger; the freedom which we assert must show itself to be this stronger one. It must so manage its cause as to show what depends on it, what its value is, what is at stake, if men are forced to bid farewell to it as to an old delusion. If the opponent seeks to depreciate this value in any way, its advocates must put the matter in a clear light. Here too honesty is the best policy. The more we can concede to them, the more will what remains, though apparently little, be shown to be all-important.

Our opponents often emphasise that this feeling of moral obligation united to this feeling of freedom has, in the centuries of its rule, accomplished little enough. As all storks do not sacrifice themselves for their offspring, but only those which are impelled to it by their necessarily determined nature, so has it been, spite of all talk of duty and freedom, with men so far; and will continue to be in the future, even when these sermonisings on responsibility and freedom are a thing of the past.

Even progress will not be stopped when this happens. Out of the actual needs of human society new rules, better and more serviceable to the needs of the common life, will continually develop; the individual will be forced to follow them, partly consciously as the result of education, partly unconsciously by the still more potent influence of heredity. Even then a sort of feeling of responsibility will not be quite absent; while yet the imagination that we could act differently than we do will naturally disappear. But human society is in any case in need of laws; to maintain these is the purpose of punishment; the idea and sensation of punishment is then the still possible effective sense of responsibility, and the normal motive for human conduct is found in the sphere of law. When this is not present, the doctor must be called in, for men without this feeling of responsibility are mentally incapable. No objection need be raised that by the feeling of responsibility something different from that heretofore accepted is understood: why may not mankind, arrived at a new stage, be suffered to give a new connotation to old terms, and use them in a new sense? Why not, say they, go a step further? Let us allow that those rules of conduct which are essential to human society do so operate—such was once the machinery of the world—that such actions as are not in accordance therewith are accompanied by that remarkable feeling of pain which has hitherto been called a feeling of guilt, in the sense that the guilty person is the voluntary author of his own action. Of course (they continue) that appears to us as really a gross illusion; but certainly we may assume the possibility, and for the previously explained reasons grant that it is at the least a possibility, that it is just in this way the sense of ‘oughtness,’ the deepest meaning and highest ‘value’ are achieved. Our opponents shall not say that we are not initially able to follow their thought, so little are we in need, on the contrary, of keeping back any question whatever. *E.g.*, the advocates of freedom, however it may be limited, do not doubt that its decisions for ‘the good’ are by no means unimportant in their totality. Only it is self-evident that this is not demonstrable to the opponents of freedom.



But if we followed their boldest thoughts into their most secret recesses, what could we object to them, what ought we to retain, in spite of all, in order to hold aloft the banner of freedom? One thing, only one thing, would be different in a humanity which had seen through the great delusion of freedom, and regulated its action in this new lucid apprehension of the delusion it had seen through. One thing would be different, and that the thing in which they had so far seen the highest attainable; in which they realised their true self—that feeling of self-hood which has its origin in subjection to an absolute ‘ought,’ by means of a personal act held to be free. Goethe has put the confession of faith of the determinist in finely chiselled words: “So must you be: you cannot escape from self: thus said long ago sybils and prophets: and no time and no force can dismember the impressed form which so long as it lives, develops.”

The same Goethe has done homage to the majesty of the ethical point of view in contradistinction to the æsthetical consideration in the confession:—“When a man endures the hardest, and puts constraint on himself, then you may point to him joyfully and say—that is the man, that is himself,” and—

Never let thy courage falter,  
Let the crowd drift idly by;  
Who never with his task will palter  
Can accomplish all that’s high.

That would no longer be true. Then the greatest of evils, which is guilt, this man of the future would no longer know in the old sense. But the capacity for this feeling humanity has long considered to be an attestation of its dignity. Then on this point also there prevails, far beyond the circle of those who openly take up the cross of freedom, a silent agreement. Theoretical deniers of freedom, who cannot do enough to ridicule belief in freedom as the acme of folly, do when any occasion of self-judgment arises act as if there were such a thing as freedom. This is seen from the fact that they grow angry if they are treated as if there were no freedom; they feel such treatment as an indignity. And what is true of

individuals is true of mankind as a whole. Doubtless man can exist without any belief in freedom, but not without a loss of that which, however blurred and obscure, he has regarded as a dignity belonging to human nature. Are we to allow ourselves to be lowered to the position of mere marionettes on the stage of life? Even hero-worship, often strange enough, is a kind of irregular craving for the idea of liberty. Strange, if we do homage to men of genius, at festivals held in their honour, while on the same occasions we are assured they are the product of necessity. And yet in this there lies an unconscious protest against the devastating scepticism which denies freedom.

Why is it so? What we propounded at the outset is now intelligible. Our mental life has its specialty in a mainly unconscious striving for self-realisation, for independence of the nature within us and outside us. It presses forward to this goal in many ways—in the conquest of external nature, in the spiritual nature by means of art and science; but in no way so deep and high, so mightily and inwardly concentrated, as in the activities we designate as moral, in the full recognition of an absolute law as a fact *sui generis*. It is in this that man is raised above the diverse events of the external world, and also of the multiplicity of his own natural impulses, and reaches an inner unity, and raises himself above all limitation of freedom. And it has likewise already been made clear that this freedom reaches its goal in communion with others. Here it is pertinent once more to emphasise the point from which we started out. This demonstration of the importance which belongs to freedom and moral law is no actual proof, cannot, and is not intended to be so, in the sense that the unwilling can be compelled by it. The only possible proof which is to be wished for in the interests of the subject is contained in the demand that the moral law should be recognised by acting the part of a free man, and thus freedom itself be experienced as a reality. But this appeal is no shift of embarrassment. This culminating justification of the absolute law, of the 'ought,' of responsibility, of freedom, or, differently expressed, of conscience, fits in exactly with the subject which needs

justification, and may with good conscience be said to be complete. It is shown that the idea of 'ought' is inseparable from responsibility; the idea of responsibility from that of freedom; and how this latter is to be understood in such way that no well-founded objections can be raised against it. More the advocates of freedom cannot desire for themselves. "He is happy who can only be sufficiently assured that there exists no proof of its impossibility" (Kant). And then we realised to ourselves what it is that depends on the meaning of that 'ought' which is inseparable from freedom of the will; which is nothing less than the personal dignity of the individual and the dignity of human nature. From all these premisses there arises the unavoidable conclusion found in the summons and appeal to use that freedom, for there is no other way of reaching a conviction of its reality. A parable of this foundation truth of the moral life intrudes upon our attention, which in its core is as old as the experience of this truth itself, but acquires new significance in the fierce battle on this question of free volition. A wanderer has lost his way on the mountains, and his companions; a return is impossible, and in front of him is the yawning abyss. A bold spring is his only chance. But first he demands proof of its feasibility. Then he must perish. The importance of the leap, if it succeeded, was clear to him, and he could be convinced 'that no proof of its impossibility exists.' But he wanted more, impossible in the nature of the case. So he made his choice, refusing to put the matter to the test, to his own undoing. Perhaps we may say that there is an increasing readiness to agree with such reflections, and, at the least, to make it quite plain that if there is a moral life it can be of no other kind than this; and that life in the deepest sense is valueless if there is no moral life of this kind. We hear it again and again more openly said on this question of free volition: It is usually only insoluble problems that are thus never-ending. And it is little likely that the kind of assertion will long continue which says: The believers in free volition are the half-convinced persons who, in their uncertainty, seek support in those whom they suppose to be absolutely great, while the wholly convinced, standing with their feet

firmly planted on a full reality, though subject to outward changes, have no need of such idols. The heat shown in the battle for this conviction scarcely befits the subject. Happily, however, in such personal devotion to an ideal there is a point of unity for all who will personally battle for the good, however they may contend as to its meaning.

With such thoughts we stand without perceiving it on the threshold of the second problem which we must add to an apologetic of Christian ethics, and that is the justification of a connection between morality and religion.

### MORALITY AND RELIGION.

This connection is the really deepest offence which the modern consciousness takes to Christian ethics (p. 50 ff). By the idea of a personal God of holy love, all ethical principles become so transcendently, so supersensuously defined, that modern ethics—essentially psychological and of this world—discovers a feeling of antagonism, all the deeper because it is not always conscious of it. We kept this antagonism in the background, because a common agreement on another important point with a system of ethics not distinctively Christian, seemed possible and advantageous. That point was in reference to the great questions of the moral law and freedom, as well as its immediate experience in the phenomena of conscience. But this very investigation now points beyond itself to the connection between the moral and the religious. For that ‘ought’ understood in its depth makes the question unavoidable—is it really intelligible if we stop within the circle of our mental life? is not the moral, so to speak, something towering over us? If we, possessing a responsible personality and recognising an absolute law, are raised above the nature which is in us and outside us, is this prodigy, this break with the world, this unity with its correspondent freedom, this dignity of personality and of a realm of *persons* anything reasonable in itself if we stop with self? We have already seen above that that absolute ‘ought’ has not any content you please; and that it can only be properly understood when united with a quite definite



content, and one that is the highest conceivable (p. 26). Submission to the monastic ideal does not lead to real unity and freedom of the inner life; certain though it be that it has been recognised innumerable times as an absolute command to be aimed at. But how are we to define that highest conceivable content, and what is its origin? Christian ethics believes that it has the satisfying answer in the Christian idea of God; and judges that even those friends of the imperative 'ought,' who hold back from the religious conception of it, can find no unimpeachable reason for the common 'Goods' (so far defended), except in this theistic belief. But as soon as this name of God is mentioned, those who have so far been friends are accustomed with notable promptness to unite with our opponents, and assure us that the idea of God endangers morality. The many various objections which are heard all end finally in heteronomy<sup>1</sup> and eudæmonism. Religious ethics asserts that the validity of our ideas of good and evil is dependent on external authority, in fact, on the will of God; while, as a matter of fact, the decisive truth is that man is a law to himself, and in this finds the unity of his inner life. Religious ethics consequently is enslaving and insecure. Eudæmonism (or hedonism), not troubling itself about a law presented by the will, maintains that the Good to be aimed at is not internal harmony but sensuous happiness, even if it is that of the so-called 'other world.' The reference to the prospect of reward or punishment disturbs, it is said, the purity of moral motive, and deeply injures true moral power, however much it may at first sight appear to be an incentive. It would carry us too far to examine all these objections in the light of all the criteria or points of view named. In any case we are forced to ask, is modern ethics, when in earnest, so free and independent of that belief as it declares that it is when it criticises Christian ethics for associating it with its scheme? And so far as it is free, is it logical? After that we can without prejudice examine and

<sup>1</sup> Heteronomy is a term used by Kant as a designation for a false principle of morals such as receives acknowledgment when personal desire determines the right for us instead of moral law. 'Autonomy of the Reason' is the recognition of moral law as the absolute law of life,—TR. (Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*.)

pass judgment on this synthesis, this connection of Christian faith with Christian ethics.

*Morality without Religion.*

Is there really any such thing as religion without morality, or morality without religion? As a matter of fact, in the history of humanity both have entered into the most manifold unions, and these still persist alongside one another to-day, as the reports of travellers and missionaries as well as what we find around us show. And it is equally the case that both past history and present experience afford examples of how such unions become dissolved. At one time it is the gods who determine what is Good; at another time what is then regarded as Good is put under their protection, and they themselves become idealised forms, and examples of what is Good. In what various ways that can be represented in the varying stages of religious and moral development! But these questions, attractive and important as they are, do not concern us now. It is rather the question as to the inner connection between morality and religion. The task is difficult, because it is not easy to keep the investigation on a purely scientific level. If we note how frequently and deeply it employs the conversation of neighbours and the silent communings of our own minds, we shall recognise how easily personal inclination and dislike, desire and anxiety mingle. The question becomes more difficult through the impressive warning against judging others which is given by Christian ethics, and in general by reason of the real earnestness with which it lays stress on the worthlessness of religion without a moral standard. It is not he who says "Lord, Lord," but "he who does the will of my Father in heaven," who may expect to enter into the kingdom of God. Certainly this speaks of morality with a religious sanction, but yet we have a clear warning not prematurely, externally, and hypocritically to unite and confound the moral and the religious. In Church history is written the most forcible comment on this word. On the other hand, the readiness to give morality its full recognition even when it appears to be separated from the religious motive, has often

been so great as to justify the use of the saying: "Be not righteous overmuch." That saying of our Lord Himself points the right way, which is to examine facts without preconceptions, and then only to draw the general inferences which they suggest.

The facts point to the distinction between individual and the larger groups of human society. History has handed down no example of whole nations firmly and permanently maintaining high moral ideals disconnected from religious belief. But doubtless there are individuals who without any religious belief gain the respect of upright Christians; by their moral life perhaps put them to shame. Particularly is that so in a complex civilisation. Therefore, in the middle of the nineteenth century the expression 'unconscious Christianity' found so much vogue. From such facts can anything conclusive be drawn as to the connection of morality and religion? Shall we conclude that the moral life without Christianity lives on the reflex influence and the unconscious influence of Christian faith? or, *vice versa*, that they are the preludes of a future humanity whose morality is independent of religion?

It is said: "Nothing utopian influences the mind of a moral agent; the phantasy of God neither inflames him nor blinds him." "The forces which move men are known, calculable, and are the rule and reason of his endeavours; the sacred majesty of life is felt." We must pause at such high-flown utterances of atheistic morality, and perhaps at the form which they have taken in the ethics of positivism. For in the absence of effective action and in the absence of a worthy content of action any comparison whatever with Christian ethics would fail. So we may leave this exalted language without corrective criticism. We merely ask whether it is quite intelligible in the absence of any definite judgment as to the course of the world in reference to this moral endeavour, and in the absence of any judgment whether it has been successful; and if so, in what degree, and whether permanently or only for the time being. Now, there are many who answer this question quite openly something as follows: We do not know whether evolution will work out to a tragedy or a comedy, and we

cannot alter it. We only see a portion and not the consummation. Why do not all give the like answer? Clearly, from the standpoint of irreligious morality, this is the only consistent answer. For a definite judgment would be a judgment on the world and the purpose of the world, and therefore a theory of the universe; in short, a faith, perhaps not the Christian faith, but some sort of one. This would be to admit that the morality in question is not independent of religion, and yet that it is independent was the very proposition asserted. But why this great aversion to plain and open utterance, or, anyhow, why so much reserve? Indeed, why so many poetic expressions like 'sacred majesty of life,' 'eternal powers of human nature'? It may possibly arise from a secret longing for a safe foundation for this boasted independent morality.

We may most speedily arrive at some explanation of this question by separating it entirely from the question as to the religious motives of action. The Christian not only sees no reason to oppose the anxiety felt as to introducing the idea of God too prematurely and in the wrong place, and thus disturbing the purity of moral action, but can understand this feeling most unreservedly, and express it most vigorously. For the hunger after righteousness to which Jesus promises satisfaction is not quieted by the unnourishing bread of a self-invented religion which he who thus hungers hastily offers to himself. His hunger is really a hunger which only righteousness can satisfy. Therefore the question simply is whether the man who desires the 'Good' and the Good only can reasonably be without some judgment on the reason and purpose of the world, without a theory of the universe. Even Kant, who so sternly shut out theistic belief from a consideration of this question of the ethical springs of action, did not demand that the moral man should refrain from any question whatever as to the realisation of the Good. So it is too openly a contradiction to speak of an absolute 'ought' in reference to the realisation of the highest End, and notwithstanding, to declare that it is indifferent whether it is realisable or not, whether in respect of good and evil 'reality' is indifferent or not. Almost innumerable checks confront the idea that absolute Good is realisable.



Would that it were merely checks from external nature! Would that the most oppressive were not in ourselves, in our will which has heard the command of duty! This is the line of thought whose simple convincing power misleads so many representatives of atheistic ethics to half-mystical expressions, and the point in which they are antagonistic to religion. A melancholy resignation is often some sort of compensation for that from which they shrink, and which yet forces itself on their attention. This finds utterance in their confessions: "Denial makes the bosom heave." But yet we may say that it is essentially the contradiction of Christian ethics in which they are living; what they call independent ethics and free from religion is itself the offspring of antagonism to the religious system. That which they could consistently assert of co-operation for the general welfare, or the progress of mankind, is less than their language seems to imply. And the reason is that some glimmer of light from the kingdom of God, which they consign to the land of dreams, falls on them; and the voice of duty in the individuals which they derive from His relationship to His family borrows its impressive earnestness from the old truly absolute 'ought' of Christian morality. But this verdict leads us further to the relation between—

*Christian Morality and the Christian Religion.*

If then morality without religion is shown to be not consistently thinkable, then it is at once settled that a purely sceptical attitude towards the question of a theory of the world is not tenable. But this attitude is, in the decisive point to which we just drew attention, that of irreligious ethics. It is only real conviction which can dispose of that difficulty. And we must really draw attention to the fact that the general admission that ethics and a world-theory belong together is insufficient. We must go deep down to the insight that to a definite moral idea a definite faith corresponds—to the Christian ideal the Christian faith in God. Or, to connect this with what has gone before (pp. 33 ff., 38 ff., 48 ff.), if we are once for all quite convinced why it is that an ethics which does not transcend this world ('immanent ethics') remains full of

contradictions, and that is because it only gives an uncertain answer to the 'why' and 'wherefore' of the world, it is then clear, right down to the ground, that the pessimistic theory of the world does not logically accord with real moral action—such moral action, I mean, as is directed to one End that is attainable, and does not consist of the destruction of existence, in fact, annihilation. Rather the faith that is demanded by ethics is that the reason and purpose of the world is the 'Good,' the noblest characteristic of that true reality, the Absolute, God.

This is not a matter of irresistible demonstration, as the acceptance of even the hypothesis is the result of a free volition (p. 370 ff.); but the idea is irrefutable provided that the absoluteness of the 'ought' is accepted unreservedly, and made clear in its entire significance, consequently irrefutable as a postulate of the moral consciousness. (On the insufficiency of the postulate itself *cf.* the following section). And it is important to emphasise that all pantheistic uncertainty must be kept apart from this idea of God. Perhaps we may not say that it is merely for our human point of view that the 'Good' is the highest quality of the Absolute. Such an explanation is quite conceivable on account of the closely connected difficulties which, to our thought, grow out of the idea of a God of personal goodness. But it contradicts the purpose for which in our present argument the idea of God has been introduced. Where shall we find the unconditioned 'ought' if in the Absolute the antithesis of good and evil is destroyed, and evil is only the necessary shadow of the good? And how is the commandment of love to assert itself against the might of the stronger? It was significant that some years ago, when a plan was formed to afford help to the poorest classes in London by a great organisation of charitable aid, it even met with the contradiction that these starvelings had no right to live. Here two beliefs encountered one another; two sorts of belief in regard to final reality. Is there in its innermost core that which is 'good,' or are good and evil only our human point of view? Such a foe of the waifs of society, among those who think like this, was not devoid of sympathetic recognition of the glory of goodness, but his sympathy was bounded by the

final idea he had of the plan of the work. In it goodness was for him merely a beautiful illusion, not an all-mastering reality. The perception of this is so much the more important because an unclear recognition of the 'good' as the reason and goal of the world, or, so to speak, a half-belief in the essential goodness of the Absolute, often appears in the ornamented rhetoric of poetry, and so disguises its defects, as for instance in many of the exponents of evolutionary ethics. It is surely not fortuitous that in the great optimists, like Goethe, deep doubt as to the progress of the good finds utterance; and it is merely hushing up this when stress is laid on the unused-up sources of energy of the country population as means by which the effete cities, full of moral azote, may be rejuvenated. So it is quite clear that many adherents of the modern ethics above delineated have more frequently asserted than proved the existence of progressive development. They exist to a great degree on the heritage of Christian theism without adequately recognising its uniqueness, and so are always in danger of succumbing to pessimistic ideas.

Therefore the connection of morality with religion is no reasonable reproach to Christian ethics. On the contrary, the unavoidable question as to the realisation of the 'good' demands that every system of ethics should have its final reasons, its cosmic theory, its faith, *i.e.* every system that wishes somehow to distinguish between the moral and the natural, and has any apprehension of something higher than itself. It cannot push that question aside as irrelevant; which is as much as to say, it cannot permanently be consciously atheistic, it must have the courage to venture to grasp the supersensual. And this grasp cannot be on empty-space, on nothing: pessimistic ethics is a self-contradiction. But there exists also a superficial faith in the power of the good in all kinds of forms. This may indeed suffice for an indefinite moral endeavour. A whole series of stages of moral and religious doctrine corresponding therewith may be shown to exist. This is the case even within Christianity, as, *e.g.*, the God of the Renaissance idea of piety—the indulgent, all-loving Father—clearly belongs to a morality of the universal-benevolence type, *i.e.* a form of utilitarianism. A look into the

depth of that 'ought' and up to the heights of a supersensual world should be a recollection of and return to a God of redeeming love. Guilt and grace are mutual implicates. And thus every step in the illustration of Christian ethics becomes also an advance in knowledge of the inseparability of Christian morality from an unabridged Christian faith. Then it becomes lucidly clear—what would be merely wearisome to enumerate—how all the aspects of the Christian 'goods' are determined by the Christian faith—all those fundamental relations which we have had to consider from the beginning. It is not by any means merely the question, Will the Christian 'good' triumph? that finds its answer in a Christian belief in God. It is on this faith that the content of this definite morality which is distinct from every other is founded, its Ends and Rules. From this flow its Motives; out of this that 'ought' has its wholly unique tone. It is on this account that the elaboration of these ideas will first give a convincing refutation of the objections which modern ethics raises against ethics based on religion, and particularly against ethics so entirely based on religion as is the Christian system.

We have now spoken of the close connection of morality and religion.

With regard to

### *The Truth of the Christian Faith*

nothing decisive is so far proved. For a demand, *i.e.* a postulate, never proves that it will be satisfying, just as the coherence even of the greatest ideas proves nothing as to their reality; and as religion itself has never sought to find its basis in the reasonableness of its data, but has offered itself as a reality to experience. This is the point where the justification of ethics (whose principles we would delineate) depends on dogmatics, or in which both merge in the wider scope of apologetics (p. 4). We do not mean that apologetics can adduce an irresistible proof of the existence of God, but it can show what are the limits generally within which such proof can be given, which are not drawn by the arbitrary desire of the believer, or even of the man of good moral intention, but by



the character of the cognition and of our cognitive faculty itself. Further, it is by no means only the Christian faith, but every faith, every conviction as to the reason and purpose of the world, which has its roots in our emotional and voluntative nature. But this faith need fear no objection on its part arising from the inner limitation of its cognitive faculty, as it rather of its own self offers a reasonable answer to the final questions of cognition. And in fact it is precisely the moral will which, with good reason, is primarily interested in the shaping of a final conviction, and consequently ethics is the mainstay of a genuine apologetic. But in such investigations the question again arises afresh, and all the more urgently, just so far as we can be convinced that the idea of God is not our idea merely, but is the highest reality; and then such an apologetic can show in its wider scope that only the self-revelation of this God can bring us to a conviction of His existence, show us what those characteristics are which the idea carries to gain our confidence, and how the religious history of mankind, and more especially that embraced in Jesus Christ, is able to produce in us the conviction of a revelation deserving of our confidence. It is not on the indifferent, but on him alone who desires the reality of the highest worth, in harmony with the special claim it makes on him, for him who hungers after righteousness, that this confidence is wrought by means of that deepest of reciprocal actions (which we either already know, or it is our duty to experience) between our moral effort and the God who in Christ works in us 'to will and to do.' But still, the third and last task comes before us in order to justify Christian ethics, and that is—

### *The Unsurpassability of Christian Ethics.*

Its opponents might agree with all that has been so far said, in the sense that the propositions on the moral law and freedom, as well as the obligatoriness of Christian morality, are in themselves consistent; but yet the fundamental doubt is not thus met, whether this Christian morality is in itself really the best. It is precisely the knowledge which has just been emphasised, that every moral conviction corresponds logically to a religious conviction of a like kind, which tends to strengthen this doubt.

This can only be satisfactorily overcome by a double demonstration. First, that no moral ideal which has so far appeared in history surpasses that of Christianity in inner content and in practical feasibility. Secondly, that it can never be surpassed in the future.

A good part of the first proof has already been given, and it is only needful to expressly recall what was said in the light of the point of view with which we are now concerned. We have already found a standard of judgment (pp. 6, 28). The palm is due to that moral ideal which guarantees most securely the inner independency of our personality, and binds mankind into a unity of such personalities. This goal is attained by the recognition of the absolute law. But, we said, it is not any content that is proper for a truly absolute 'ought'; *e.g.*, the adherents of the ideal of the common welfare, the utilitarians, could not convincingly show how far every individual ought to recognise in it a demand absolutely binding on his will. In the same way, the ideal of the complete cultivation of all our natural powers is not independent of a variety of presuppositions; it is compelled to take into account favourable endowment, fortunate circumstances, and how all alike are not favoured. How could the demand depending on such conditions be absolute and applicable to all? But this doubt generally and without reserve arises with respect to all moral systems as they came into vogue either before or after the Christian morality, and appear to-day as its rivals. The short review of the most important which occupied our attention earlier could easily be completed for our present purpose; *e.g.*, alongside the ideal of modern æstheticism more fully carried out would be that of the self-satisfied philosopher; alongside that of utilitarian hedonism that of socialism, Athenian or Spartan ideals of citizenship; and with pessimism would appear the Buddhistic self-negation with its pity often compared to Christian love. And then it would appear how these ideals, measured by that standard, have each of them a special value and each of them a special limitation: *e.g.*, how the most glorious philanthropy which regards country and state as the highest good, or the most comprehensive utilitarianism, does not guarantee the full freedom of personality; how the most

exalted stoic philosopher or the individuality of the most richly artistic temperament sundered from the duties and life of the community grows narrow and poor; how self-abnegation when it becomes self-effacement is not the true solution. And now, on the contrary, Christian morality? It counts nothing trifling which is truly good in all these ideals; it recognises heroes of self-denial and heroes of citizenship, pioneers of civilisation and creators of commerce; but all this is not the highest, but of the kingdom of God only a portion: a proving of our self-sacrificing love of our neighbour on the basis and in the power of an experienced love of God, in which alone true freedom is found—the freedom of the sons of God in the eternal kingdom of God. Even in reference to the realisation of this ideal, Christian ethics has no need to shun comparison. Certainly it is a favourite topic of many opponents to scoff at its small success in the course of so many centuries. Those who are just, however, not only admit that its effects reach out far beyond the circle of its confessed adherents, and ought to be valued and not lost; but also cannot deny that it has shown itself effective under all conceivable circumstances: in the change of the times when battling with the ancient world as when rooting itself in the spirit of the Teutonic peoples; in missions among uncivilised races in every generation and race; in every condition of culture.

But is this decisive in regard to the future of Christian ethics? Is it for ever? If it is the highest so far, is it on that account unsurpassable? And if we are not able to conceive of anything above it, because for an ideal that possibly seems higher we must suppose quite another nature than that which we now possess, what does that prove? Is it not the case that in all the departments of human activity, when, in the imagination of individuals and of mankind, they think they have reached the summit, this has been chided as false? Nevertheless the Christian Church puts forth this claim for its ethics, and the recognition of that claim and the recognition of Christian ethics appear to it one and the same thing. For in the recognition of its ideal it experiences an inner freedom which carries within it the pledge of eternity; just because it

cannot separate itself from the certainty that the realisation of this ideal is only just at its initial stage, and that by an inner necessity it points to other conditions of existence. It is its much-scorned religious character that the Christian has to thank for this certainty that it is unsurpassable. Because the Christian task has its grounds in the gift of God, and this gift is personal communion with an eternal personal God, the task is as eternal as God Himself, and yet is complete at every moment of its realisation. Of course, this certainty is staked on personal experience, but how could it be otherwise in any system of ethics deserving the name? And for whom can this kind of proof be of value but for those who have travelled some distance on the way recommended by this ethics? Just on that account this latter consideration cannot be condemned as an overweening requirement. The Christian Church sets up this claim for itself from the inner compulsion of its faith. But it keeps itself quite free from coercion of others; they are not to be led by delusion to this summit on which the infinite perspective oversteps the horizon, but to be invited step by step to enter upon the path which leads to the summit. But it would be false modesty if Christian ethics were to divest itself of this high feeling of its peerlessness. It is still the Christian faith in God to which it owes its superiority, and this faith has from the commencement been the ground and object of its special boast, in which there is no hurtful sting of vain conceit (*cf.* p. 54 ff.).





## Part II.

### Christian Ethics as a Coherent Whole.

THIS part falls into three sections. They treat of the nature of the Christian 'Good'; of its realisation in the Christian personality (individual ethics) and in human society (social ethics). As a preliminary, the distinction between Evangelical and Roman Catholic ethics is defined, and it is shown how far in Evangelical ethics the Holy Scriptures is the supreme rule.



## CHAPTER IV.

### PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS.

#### EVANGELICAL AND ROMAN CATHOLIC ETHICS.

WHEREVER mention has so far been made of the Christian life it has been tacitly meant in the sense of Evangelical Christianity, and this is not less the case in what follows. This method of statement must, however, be justified, namely, that Evangelical Christianity is distinguished from that which is 'Catholic' not merely in faith but in life, and indeed 'why' and 'how,' both with reference to the former and to the latter.

An example or two at the outset. We know how Luther judged of his Christian life before and after the great event, his "justification before God by grace through faith"; how in him was repeated in new circumstances the experience of St Paul, "What was gain to me I counted loss for Christ." What then appeared to him good is now sin, and the reverse. This example is so significant because he could claim the testimony of his opponents that, measured by their standard, he had been really good; that if any monk had deserved heaven by the works of the law, this was true of him (we merely note in passing the words 'law,' 'works,' 'desert'), and that in his monastic life apart from the world. Or we might compare the doings of the sisters of mercy with those of our Evangelical deaconesses. For even when every suspicion of depreciation is excluded the comparison becomes all the more instructive. Or we may realise for ourselves the difference between Evangelical and Catholic educational methods especially where, through historical conditions, there exists a considerable similarity of external



arrangements, as in seminarial instruction and the like. Let us reflect in this matter on the earlier-mentioned criteria of good action as to its End, Rule, Motive; on the 'ought' and the ground of the validity of and the origin of this imperative. What a multitude of differences among those external actions so similar as to be scarcely distinguishable! If it should be said that these examples are ingeniously selected, it is surely sufficient to point to the common daily life, if we are at the same time ready to allow the outward to guide us in judging of the inward; and this outward life speaks an intelligible language. If we seek out comprehensive phrases we may say that the moral action of the Roman Catholic is legalistic and that it is not independent, and so of course it is also fragmentary and external; and in this connection it is plain, though a matter of surprise to us, that it is counted as meritorious. This is in relation to its form. In relation to its content it appears to us to be afraid of the world, ascetic; and let us carefully note that this means that for the sake of this method it distinguishes a twofold morality—one which is intended for all, and a higher standard which is for the 'perfect.' Can it be wondered at that where such a great distinction is made the verdict on it wavers now to this side and now to that? You get no ethics which deserves the name. To Roman Catholics the Evangelical ethics seems irreligious, impious, godless. They find much which in their eyes seems most important almost non-existent with us; to another, that which they recognise appears really to fail in what is the best, the holiest, true devotion. And so it may seem to them that we do not take our morality seriously when sacrifice, devotion, submission, are wanting and single actions are left free to be done or not by the indefiniteness of that 'ought.' Conversely, it often seems to us that their piety is not truly ethical in its character. However much occasion we may find for reflection and in individual cases for shamefacedness, ready as we may know ourselves to be for self-criticism, their subjection under a law which is not the law of the will appears to us to be without real ethical value. Its encompassing the whole life with a net of prescriptions requiring fulfilment occasionally amounts to

carrying out the individual will against God's will. And that, in our opinion, is the very antithesis of true religion, for which no resplendent appearance of self-sacrifice and unworldliness can be a substitute.

It is further undeniable that a difference in judgment which goes down so deep as this two-sided morality can only have its roots in a fundamentally different conception of Christianity, if indeed both sides are really Christian morality, that is, a morality based on and defined by the Christian religion; and we have previously seen that the special nature of every ethics answers to its religious character. What is this difference in religious experience? The Evangelical Christian feels blessed in a humbly thankful trust in the present free love of God in Christ; in this personal communion with a personal God he attains his destiny. And it is precisely in this faith that he finds his incentive and motive power to love God and his neighbour, because God, who receives him into communion with Himself, is Love; and thus no personal communion and no blessedness of the same sort can exist without a participation in the like love, and in fact love with all the natural faculties which God has given him, and in all the natural circumstances in which He places him; for the thought that God is the omnipotent ruler of the world is taken in all earnestness. There is the full recognition of human sin and guilt without prejudice, and, what is more, with a strict recognition of them as a real contradiction to the true destiny of man. This is the whole morality of the Evangelical Christian, namely, love, which as a matter of experience springs out of faith in God. There is here no room for a law external to the will. We know well enough that moral life is a battle, and that the will of God to which we submit ourselves is our salvation, the realisation of our true destiny, which cannot be a burden. And if this will claims the whole life as its domain where duty is concerned, where is the moment in which it could withdraw itself? In the smallest as in the greatest events this will is operative, and there is for it nothing else but God's world in which everything is good in so far as it is the means for the realisation of the will of God. It is otherwise with the Roman Catholic Christian,

The salvation which is offered to him is supernatural in the sense that it is something which is external to his nature. For it is not personal communion with a personal God whose innermost mystery of holy love has been revealed, but the impartation of heavenly powers, a participation in the ineffable mystery of the divine life, which is certainly righteousness and goodness; but this type of goodness does not represent the innermost nature of God. How can it possibly be otherwise but that the will of this God, so conceived, issues in a separation from all creaturely good, the suppression of natural desire and of the social intercourses of life? It is an ideal which, of course, is only realisable by specially gifted persons. Such a content can only find its point of contact with the will in the form of an outward law; it is, in fact, a something standing side by side with our will and foreign to it. And the further claim is that the same Church which has the control of the means of grace has the regulation of all moral endeavour; and step by step, hour by hour, this must be regulated by its sacred authority. It is impossible to be independent in good, and at the same time there is a false appearance of independence in representing the human will as co-operating with secret divine grace in the performance of meritorious works. The heroes of the Roman Church, who in a glow of devotion fit themselves for miracles of self-sacrifice, never attain that moral independency which we call personal life in the good. Their piety is not the personal subjection to the personal will of God, and so their morality is not that personal freedom of which we speak.

And thus it becomes intelligible why each characteristic example of moral endeavour exhibits the marks which we placed in juxtaposition at the outset; and also why it is, as we explained, that the verdict wavers on the subject, and why we generally find it so hard to understand one another. It is not merely a question of phrases; they often sound so similar as to be interchangeable. Thus it is said, "The new law, the law of Christ given through the Church, is like the law of nature in its subjectivity, freedom, vitality, and yet is above it." Have we not also boasted of this subjectivity, freedom, and vitality of the moral law of action in our Evangelical sense? But for

the Catholic Christian all that depends on subjection to the rightly constituted Church. Nor do we recognise, as they do, that 'law of nature' as 'an innate and inalienable basis of moral thought' by which we are brought to the conviction of the divine constitution of the Church.

The Protestant intellectual basis of ethics has not only need to justify itself in contrast with the Roman Catholic as that which is truly Christian, but, curiously enough, also against the modern consciousness, which is largely inclined to regard the Catholic view of morality as that which is primitively Christian and to let it pass for that which is alone genuinely Christian, and on that account all the more resolute in discarding it. They regard the Reformation ethics not merely as a breach with Rome but with Christianity; as the first great step to its separation from it; and as paving the way for a purely secular ethics. It is comprehensible why Rome collects all such opinions zealously, and uses them in its own favour. The full exposition alone can demonstrate that these views do not fit in with the facts of the subject. But it is, in advance, intelligible why the present age, no longer believing in itself, feeling helpless in the severe conflict of real life and especially of its political life, is crying out for a rehabilitation of Christian morality, and is more ready to find support in the Roman Catholic than to trust to the Evangelical view. The yearning for an appreciable authority finds satisfaction in the former, while it has grown accustomed to see in the latter the first beginnings of free-thinking and revolution. With Rome's political friends, themselves sceptically inclined and only valuing the faith of the masses as means for their ends, are associated the sentimental Romanticists, whose fanaticism in allowing themselves without realising it to become tools in the service of that designing party seems more harmless than it really is. If hereby on both sides the Catholic morality is frequently appraised as the more popular, the more intelligible to the masses, and the more effective for their purposes, it must be remembered that a different colouring is given to it according as it is in the position to work itself out in a purely Catholic district or is in a situation of severe rivalry with Protestant influences. The



convinced Evangelical has no need to deny that his own moral convictions make larger demands on will-power, if his ethics is not, where this is deficient, to carry with it dangers to which the Catholic system is not so readily open. But in this fact he sees merely an indirect proof of its fundamental superiority.

Ought Evangelical ethics to take into consideration the difference between Lutheran and Reformed? The answer will be different according as each one judges as to the difference in the way of understanding the Gospel. And he who is inclined to regard this for the time being as a question of significance will not be able to speak so confidently on this subject as in the case where the point in debate is the position of the law in Evangelical ethics, and of the basis of moral action in justifying faith.

Another question closely connected with the Evangelical system of morals needs to be answered as a further preliminary. What is the standard to which appeal must be made in judging the statements of this system? Generally speaking, the answer cannot be doubtful: Divine revelation, on which our religion rests, which settles its character, as it is the ground of its truth; therefore, more particularly, the Holy Scriptures, which contain the decisive testimonies of the faith. This follows simply from the close association of Christian ethics with the Christian religion as both are understood by the Evangelical Church. Because these two things are so inseparably conjoined the Holy Scriptures are not only the rule and standard of doctrine but also of morality. Just as little is reason assigned a place as judge in the Evangelical system of ethics as it is arbiter in doctrine. Hence we introduced a proof of the truth of Christian ethics in order that this appeal might not seem to be delusive and fanciful, and certainly not a fetter or a hindrance but an appeal reasonable in itself, and intelligible from the nature of ethics and indeed of this ethics. This excludes the permissibility of assigning to religious experience the right of final decision in moral questions, if this means religious experience disjoined from divine revelation, if we mean by religious experience something different from belief in revelation. The Evangelical conception of ethics assumes that even the Church is not

superior to the Scriptures. The Catholic idea of legalistic subjection to the Church appears to us unethical. Therefore we cannot advocate a system of ethics which finds its supreme rule in the letter of Confessions of faith (*i.e.* creeds). Are we not ourselves, however, in danger of getting into a similar condition of external servitude to the Holy Scriptures? And if we save ourselves from that, are we not in danger of falling hopelessly into the unlimited caprice of mere pious experience? These questions are generally explained more with reference to questions of belief than those of ethics. If the same danger happens in either case, both are required. We enter upon this question in the case of ethics not with a series of general propositions but by giving simple examples, from which the most needful statements may be derived.

One of the chief questions is the difference between the Old and the New Testaments. He who would deny this difference has need to ask himself the question whether he, as a Christian, can appropriate the language of many of the so-called 'cursing psalms' and use them in prayer in their original meaning; and if so, whether that meaning would agree with the spirit of Him who on the cross prayed for his enemies, and whether he would not have first of all to bring them to Christ's cross and there transform them. It is true that to persecuted Christians like the Puritans and the Huguenots in dire need they have often enough proved a consolation and an inspiration; but Christian consolation and Christian inspiration can they be only through such transmutation under the cross. How much misery of conscience did it bring the Reformers when they undertook to condone the bigamy of the Landgraf of Hesse by appeal to the history of the patriarchs? How far was Christian opinion perturbed when the execution of Servetus was justified from the Old Testament? Both to the joy of Rome, inasmuch as when occasion needed it could represent its own thoroughly doubtful morality as the stronger, and at the same time declare that the supreme jurisdiction of the Church over the Bible was plainly inevitable; and on another occasion, inasmuch as it found a welcome precedent for the persecution of Protestants in its own camp. But it is equally certain that ethics would suffer loss

without the most ample use of the Old Testament. Ethics would not only be deprived of an inexhaustibly rich profusion of illustrations, of a unique picture-book, but also of a great aid in the education of individuals and of society in the full meaning of Christian morality itself. For just as this is built up on the foundation of the preparatory revelation, so individuals and nations repeat in their own case these histories of a progressive revelation. Without the figure of Abraham, simple as was his shepherd life, and yet as inexhaustibly profound as the starry firmament; without the main pillars of simple reverence for God, and trust in Him, of love to those nearest to them, as these things are embodied in those narratives of the Old Testament, there could be no understanding of the New; without absorbed study of the prophets, no deep consideration of their fulfilment. Even quite apart from definite Christian ethics, we should be compelled to take to heart what the great Goethe, the connoisseur of human nature, witnesses to the influence of the Old Testament on the elemental basis of his own most characteristic culture. In his distracted life and his hap-hazard acquisition of knowledge he found help there in concentrating his mind and his emotions into tranquil activity, and 'found himself' whether in the greatest isolation or in the best society. The more dissipating our present-day life is, right on from our early start in it, the more need is there for this home of the heart.

If we can without serious difficulty sum up all that has been so far said, in the proposition that no constituent part of Christian morality can be founded solely on the Old Testament, but that the great importance claimed for it can only be maintained on the ground of the *New Testament*, yet when we turn to this, new and serious difficulties confront us. Most persons will admit, of course, that every single precept given by the first disciples is not applicable as a part of Christian ethics for all times, as soon as they are reminded of such details as those in Corinthians (1 Cor. xi. 4) of praying with the head covered or uncovered. Where more important matters are in question this admission is made less readily and less generally, as possibly in the opinions of St Paul on marriage and the status of women.

But the admission that is made, small as it is, cannot but suggest caution in the enunciation of universal propositions, even with the good design of laying down an immovable foundation for the Christian life. That word, "If they keep my saying, they will keep yours," stands in need of elucidation. The Lord who calls Himself the 'Truth' does not ask us to veil any fact. And that word does not mean the Apostles only, although it refers to them in an especial degree, as the original recipients of His words, chosen to be such by Him, trained by Him, and filled with His Spirit, as well as intellectually capable. But, it might be said, so much the more certainly is every word of Jesus Himself regulative for Christian ethics, and its whole compass to be ruled by His words alone. But to take literally His saying as to those who "make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" is rightly regarded among us as an immoral perversion, and that as to offering the other cheek as comparatively harmless. Where is the boundary-line between the literal and the genuine spiritual meaning? Now, the whole problem as to how far the words of the Lord are the supreme standard of Christian ethics demands a much wider setting. And on this account: a multitude of serious moral questions occupies our attention which did not concern early Christianity at all, or not in the same way. Not in the same way, because at first the whole energy of the Church, even in its outward attitude to daily life, was bound to be directed to its chiefest anxiety for the coming of the Kingdom more entirely than was the case later. Not as if this anxiety ought ever to be less than its chiefest anxiety, but still it is in a different way as determined by the course of history, which is under divine guidance, however much affected by human sin. Thus, in the Epistle to Philemon it is perfectly clear that the slave was in Christian judgment intended to be regarded as something more than a slave, and it is equally clear that at first the institution of slavery remained untouched. The same thing is true of the position of woman; of the appeal to the secular law on the part of the Christian; and of engaging in public life generally. However we may determine as to details, the fact which is of importance for us here remains just the same: that a series of



moral problems did not concern the early Church in the same way as it does us. There are others with which they were scarcely concerned at all. For instance, commercial life of course stood in need of direct illumination from the Christian faith, as the Epistles to the Thessalonians show. But a social question—in the same sense as for us in this day of machinery, when not only has slavery been abolished, but also feudal service and every legal form of personal dependence—did not exist for the early Church, because no such conditions existed in its day. Just so is it in relation to the Church. It is thus clear that moral commands cannot be directly taken from isolated sayings of the New Testament. This is practically impossible on account of the actual character of the New Testament.

But still more. *It ought not to be otherwise.* No moral command ought to be directly taken from an isolated saying of the New Testament. If we were to assert this we should abandon the idea of the conformity of our whole daily life to Scripture requirement. Clearly so for those particular departments of it which lay outside its horizon, and, looked at more closely, even for those which were then already important, since in the course of history certainly one period never corresponds exactly to another; and even where there is an apparent similarity there is a different undercurrent and another colouring. In truth, on this presupposition Christian ethics would not be unsurpassable as the Christian Church is convinced is the case. For as it is surely undeniable that history offers new problems, these could only be regarded as indifferently cared for if they were not from the outset considered in the utmost detail. It is only if by faith in Christ there can be to each generation, in its special need, a certainty what the will of God revealed in Christ means for it and desires from it, that the will of God can ever prevail. It is one of the encouraging features of the present time that almost on every side the principle is admitted that it is only in this way that our life can be Christianly ruled, and only thus with complete earnestness. In the department of doctrine, Christianity has many more opponents; in ethics it is impossible to live consistently without it, and life is stronger than a preconceived idea. Ethics con-

sequently helps doctrine to reach a purer form. This truth might probably be more universally accepted, and still more pleasing would be such general sanction, if its exponents were at all times ready and ever more ready to learn from the foe a reverential attitude towards the Holy Scriptures; if they would think no saying unimportant, and seek to ascertain the permanent value of that which was spoken for the occasion. By this means, in fact, that which appears to be merely indifferent grows significant without any limitation of required freedom; rather, on the contrary, strengthening and increasing it.

This freedom, moreover, cannot be given up without giving up the essence of Christian morals. There can be no other kind of scriptural conformity at all that does not mean disturbing and perverting the Gospel, which in the Scriptures bears witness to the grace of God, and to the morality conjoined with it. For we at the outset arrived at the conclusion that moral action is action according to an absolute law which the will can recognise as its own; in the fulfilment of which men attain their true destiny, freedom from all the world within and without. That for the Christian the will of God is the 'Good' has not appeared to us as a contradiction of this freedom, but as its completion. The service of God is 'perfect freedom.' But that is only true if this service is not mere self-subjection to a number of isolated commands, but one that issues from a confidence in the will of God revealed in its innermost nature.

Certainly we must accept with gratitude all single precepts met with in the New Testament which are so clearly conceived, so plainly shaped by the Spirit who created the Word that it is at once clear to us that every other utterance, when tested by these precepts, is inferior to them in force and point. But the duty of proving "what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God" we have not carried out until such a saying has been made clear to us in its connection with the central truth of the Gospel, and we, in applying it independently to our particular circumstances, can determine what it now means for us. "This is the will of God in Christ for you," says St Paul, when he gives the last decision from which there is no longer any appeal. Therefore he says '*the* will,' the one all-embracing

will. Every student of the Scriptures recognises that the Apostle, filled with the Spirit, did in faith receive from that great will of God those striking words to the Thessalonians on the necessity of work, and those to the Corinthians on purity and Church unity. It is only following his example if we say: From the principles of the Christian 'Good,' as it is made certain to faith from the revelation in Christ, we have, likewise in faith, to derive all the single propositions of ethics and to test them by it. "Let every one be like minded" with Jesus Christ (Phil. ii. 5), and "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. xiv. 23). This is the true conformity to Scripture of Evangelical ethics.

Of course it is not merely the Roman Church that scoffs at this 'secure insecurity,' and offers, by its infallibility, to every halting Christian soul at the confessional box a certainty which cannot deceive. Even amongst ourselves the complaint is still heard that the appeal to Scripture is liable to be arbitrary; that as a matter of fact in such appeal we import our own ideas into the Scripture, and that it is always exposed to this danger. For example, in the question whether our present Church polity (or changes in it) is conformable to Scripture, only one thing, it is said, can save us from perplexing fallacy, and that the unreserved following out of all the demands of the New Testament literally. We will not here raise the question whether the grandiloquent proposals of those who make themselves heard on this question are practicable—nor whether they are at all possible; whether, for instance, the Church of Corinth or the Church of Jerusalem, with or without a community of goods, should be taken as model; or whether any such formal arrangements, viewed as obligatory, are in accordance with the genius of Christianity. We desire now rather to point out with insistence that our principle is not meant to imply that anyone who chooses has the right to derive from a principle of Christianity—just as he is pleased to take it—rules for the regulation of the life of the Christian Church. As the Evangelical Christian judges, it is rather the case that by the method of freedom of faith the principle taken from Holy Scripture becomes continually more clearly under-

stood in the course of history, works itself out into continually clearer distinctness. We may add that the confidence in which believers are established in the promise of a Spirit who should "lead them into all truth" has never been deceived. Did not St Augustine under diverse circumstances more clearly understand the Gospel than anyone between him and St Paul? Yet he gained that knowledge from St Paul's writings. And Luther under the guidance of St Augustine dived deeper than he into the meaning of St Paul's doctrine of justification. Each time this deep insight into God's gift corresponded to a deep insight into the problem inseparable from it; the progress of faith answering to the progress of the Christian life. Thus occupation of our thought with that objection which we called the conformity of Evangelical ethics to the Holy Scripture serves only to a better comprehension of its true meaning. Of course the actual proof is, in this connection, reserved as to whether we have not ingeniously forced what was a matter of historical development into the origins; that is to say, whether the idea of individuality and the results of civilisation ought not to be acknowledged to be a completely new attainment of history. On that we must speak later in treating of the idea of the highest good, of civilisation, of character, etc. Therefore we are fully conscious of the danger of artificial Scripture proof even on this point. But the fundamental principle above spoken of follows simply from that which has been explained as to the connection of the Christian life with Christian faith. And we may at once say that even those who raise this objection insist that those wider developments of Christian morality have their base finally in the Christian idea of God; and for them this idea of God depends on the revelation in Christ. Now we have its regulative testimony in the Holy Scripture. What objection, then—leaving out details—ought to be raised to the notion thus set up of a Scripture proof?

#### THE DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT-MATTER.

The formal *divisions* of Christian ethics are not nearly so much settled by tradition as those of doctrinal theology. So much the more must we have regard to the fact that it is most



agreeable to the nature of the subject to treat it in the simplest way possible. Bearing this in mind, we are justified in distinguishing between individual and social ethics. That is, the ethical forms of the personal life, and of social life on Christian principles, have each their separate divisions. Of course, where it is a question of alternative courses of action, 'either,' 'or,' the whole subject-matter must be treated from the point of view of individual ethics, by reason of the unique value which every human soul has in the view of Christian ethics. But this 'either,' 'or' is not existent; and it merely produces an impression of artificiality if the groups, 'family,' 'state,' and the like, are considered as merely theatres of activity for individual persons. But this procedure essentially fails to estimate the real value which society, without depreciation of the individual, finds as a Christian community of those who are adopted into the kingdom of God. Of course, when we come to details, various sorts of difficulties arise from this mode of dividing the subject. To follow them out is more interesting from the point of view of methodology than helpful in treatment. It may be sufficient to remark that the whole of the subject-matter appertaining to individual and social ethics is not treated so that no gaps are left, in a way that a complete treatment might demand. For instance, art is treated in the section on social ethics only. The alternative proposal to consider the whole subject-matter from the point of view of what the ethical 'Good' is, and to determine the value of each moral 'good' both for the individual and for society, would make it difficult to do full justice to the other aspects of the subject, which concern Norm and Motive. It is, in fact, asking that these two divisions of individual and social ethics should be treated closely together, and grounded in one delineation of the innermost essence of the Christian Good. But so far that has only been done cursorily—once, in order to help us to compare the Christian ethical ideal with others, and again, in order to set ethics of the Evangelical kind in contrast with the Roman Catholic system. To do this explicitly is our next task.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN GOOD.

#### CHRIST THE 'PRINCIPLE' OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

WHEN we asked what it really is that constitutes the 'Good,' or what is the principle of ethics, we found that the consideration of it in various aspects was helpful to us in understanding the term 'Good' in those various significations which are frequently not clearly distinguished. These we must recall. We refer to those questions: What is the 'Good,' considered from the point of view of its End, Rule, Motive, and the imperative 'Thou shalt'? The other questions, What is its Origin? and what its validity? are, in their relation to Christian ethics, most closely associated on account of the connection that exists between Christian morality and Christian faith. Our love of God and of our neighbour in the kingdom of God, which has its origin in God's love to us, depends wholly and entirely on that exhibition of His love which is found in the revelation of His love in Christ. This is the foundation on which it rests; which gives it its value; which wholly and entirely determines its End, its Norm; from which arises all possibility of its existence, and which is the impulse and energy of it in its commencement, continuance, and completion. Even the imperative 'Thou shalt' is something wholly unique, and it is so on account of the fact that the will to which it appeals is a will which has apprehended the love of God, and has been able to understand and apprehend that love, because it has long previously wrestled with that 'Thou shalt.' Therefore we are able and are compelled to maintain

that, rightly regarded, *Christ is the principle of Christian ethics*, and that too when we take the term 'principle' in all the relations just referred to. The New Testament expresses this truth in the plainest manner by the use of every possible preposition in connection with Christ. 'Of,' 'out of,' 'through,' 'to,' 'according to,' 'on account of,' 'in' Christ all Christian men act, believe, love, live, and die. All the moral action of Christian men is referred to Christ as the personal source of the highest 'Good.' To win Christ is the same as to win a 'jewel,' 'life,' 'the kingdom.' All that the Christian does, he does after Christ's example. He aims at conformity to Christ and to be fashioned after His image. It is 'in Christ,' *i.e.* impelled and strengthened by Him, that the goal can be reached in such a way. Therefore it is Christ who is the pre-eminent 'Thou shalt' to Christians, because He not only points out the goal, the way and the source of power, but He Himself is all these things. To lay hold of Christ is to lay hold of true freedom, while to resist Him is the greatest and, ultimately regarded, the only sin. All this implies that because He reveals the only good God, and because by our trust in Him God actually gives Himself to our experience (that is to say, is operative in us, producing greater trust in Him), this Christian faith in this God is inseparably one with the Christian moral life, as was shown to some extent previously (p. 100 ff.), and must now be treated in detail.

One aspect of this faith must be specially emphasised. Christ occupies this unique position in Christian ethics inasmuch as it is one and the same person who is the historic Christ and the glorified Saviour. His historic life is such as to awaken our confidence that He is not confined within earthly bounds; that as the glorified Saviour He is eternally perfecting what has already been begun in His earthly life. It is thus that the pre-eminence of Christian ethics depends on Him. Every application of it to new circumstances, the whole development of it on earth, and in conditions of existence which transcend all that is earthly, find in Him their reason and support, their measure and end. It is He who unites those spatial and temporal conditions which for our present knowledge are incompre-

hensible. To explain and assign reasons for this significance of Christ's person for ethics forms part of the subject-matter of doctrinal theology; but its real character would be imperfectly conceived if we did not at the outset give due prominence to this thought, or if in our subsequent treatment we lost sight of it in any way. Of course it would be tediously circumstantial to be constantly repeating the idea.

The further arrangement of our thoughts is conditioned by this idea. It is under this presupposition that we are sure that nothing essential will be omitted when we speak of 'End,' of the highest Good of Christian moral actions, of the highest Norm which corresponds to this end, and of the Motive for its realisation as all alike inseparable from Christ. For it is by this method that it is made clear that the Christian *life* rests completely and fully on the foundation of the Christian *faith*, since this Christian faith is itself, in respect of its innermost nature, moral faith. That is to say, it is the faith that men, who are engaged in a moral contest, who 'hunger after righteousness,' have in the gracious self-revelation of the only good, God, the perfect Father in Christ, who bestows salvation on them by filling them with the righteousness for which they hunger (St Matt. v. 6).

#### THE HIGHEST GOOD IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

All action has an end at which it aims; all moral action is the endeavour to realise moral ends, and whenever it has attained the higher stage it embraces in itself all individual ends in one single highest 'Good,' to the realisation of which the highest value is assigned. We have already shown by the most important examples of present-day thought how variously the highest Good is defined. We have so far used the term 'Kingdom of God' for the 'highest Good' of Christian ethics. Following the New Testament, other terms too have been employed: 'self-denial,' 'repentance,' 'crucifixion of the flesh.' These awaken the feeling that abnegation of the natural life is the essence of Christian ethics, whereas they only express one part of it. Other terms, such as 'self-realisation,' 'holiness,' 'likeness to God,' are too indefinite, or have likewise too



individual a reference, and do not also regard the community of individuals. Next to 'Kingdom of God,' the most suitable may possibly be 'divine adoption,' or 'the realisation in love of justification by faith'; and especially this latter, by which ethics directly joins itself on to doctrine; and the Evangelical standpoint at once stands out clearly, except that in this the individual is too much in the foreground. With the term 'Kingdom of God' the individual is recognised more surely in his full importance, for the Kingdom of God is the kingdom of the children of God; while, on the other hand, the term 'divine adoption' or justification gives full recognition to the collective whole. And he will especially have a preference for the use of the term 'Kingdom of God,' as the highest 'Good' in ethics, who in dogmatics sees the nature of our religion most compactly comprehended in the same word. Of course it is possible that a doubt may arise: if religion is concerned with dependence on God, while ethics somehow with self-activity, ought the same notion to be supreme in both? Now, it was maintained to begin with, and subsequently repeated, that the reason of the special interconnection of faith and life, such as characterises Christianity, lies in the nature of our religion as of our ethics; and in it there also lies the reason for the fact that the term 'Kingdom of God' has so unique and twofold a suitability for being the fundamental idea of doctrine and of ethics.

But it has been declared with considerable emphasis that we cannot justify the employment of the term 'Kingdom of God' in ethics at any rate from the New Testament. In the lips of Jesus Christ it means, it is said, the Sovereignty of God, which, by the mighty power of God, will in the future dawn upon us from heaven. In a wider sense it means that inexpressible fulness of all the best 'Goods.' Thus its realisation is not exactly a human problem; it is not an ideal which they realise by their activity; certainly not of such sort as that its true nature consists in the establishment of a great communion of love. This objection, so far as it concerns us, may be set aside most convincingly rather by asking whether the ideas which we sum up in the term 'Kingdom of God' are in unison with the

whole character of Christ's teaching than by entering in detail on the tedious question as to what sense He attached to the term 'Kingdom of God.' At all events we do, on the whole, best satisfy the requirement as to its Scripture use and Scripture proof by maintaining that it is really a Gospel use. There can, however, be no doubt on the subject: the great 'gift of God,' as it is always called, and described in manifold ways so as to express its varied inexhaustibility—as, *e.g.*, 'fellowship with God,' 'born of God,' 'dwelling in God,' 'eternal life,' 'knowledge of God,' 'fear of God,' 'trust in God,' 'love of God,' 'righteousness,' 'salvation,' 'peace,' 'joy,' 'glory'—this gift is of such a kind that it is of itself a task to be performed. More closely: it is said with much insistence that first of all the Kingdom (God's work and the gift of gifts) is only shared in by those in whom it is real, who desire to fulfil God's will, and in fact can only be regarded as the reward of such fulfilment. That might certainly in and for itself be a very external relation between 'gift' and 'task,' and does indeed forbid us distinguishing both by the same term, 'Kingdom of God.' But in what does the 'gift' consist? Not in material comfort but in true righteousness; in doing the will of God, which becomes active in our will; in fellowship with the Father who is perfect, with God who is love; and in communion with all the children of this Father. This is the condition to which the gift is attached. Both are therefore of the same nature and consequently inseparable. Luther hits the sense of the New Testament with his sayings: "The Kingdom of God is nothing else than being full of all virtue"; "To take pleasure in God's law is salvation"; "The accomplishment of His good will in us is life"; "God living and ruling in us is the enjoyment of the highest good." And it is instructive to contemplate under this aspect those other terms, too, which express the highest Good. Unless we make clear to ourselves this inseparability, because they are pairs, of 'gift' and 'task,' we cannot understand them at all. But still more: earnestly as Jesus insists that it means striving after righteousness, and that its result is the possession of righteousness, He leaves it in no doubt that this would be for ever in vain if God did not bestow it; that prevailing courage

for the struggle has its source in the power of the joyful news of that which God does. Conversely, as unreservedly as He offers this gift as a present only, so emphatically does he accentuate that no one can rejoice in the gift who will not attempt the task; that he who has received forgiving love without stint, should without stint practise forgiving love; that the very condition for understanding this task is to receive the gift; for spiritual poverty is itself a yearning for the coming of the Kingdom, a personal hunger after the 'Good' of righteousness. In this deepest sense the 'gift' does on account of its nature become a 'task.' This at the same time settles that other disputed question, so far as it relates to ethics—whether the Kingdom of God is only something in the future. It is much the same thing as asking whether the term denotes any reality in this world. On account of its nature the Kingdom of God is already a present reality where men believe on the Father and love the brethren. That in this way the Kingdom of God is, with regard to its earliest beginnings, realised under earthly relations is indubitable; but Christianity in its fulness does not really know of any other kingdom except that which springs out of eternity and stretches out into eternity.

Now this justification of the notion 'Kingdom of God' as a comprehensive expression for the highest Goal of moral endeavour, the highest Good of Christian ethics, is, at the same time, the justification of what was, at the commencement, asserted with regard to the distinction and interconnection between doctrine and ethics (p. 4). Both have the Kingdom of God as their subject, but the former looks at it as a 'gift,' which, however, is certainly necessary for the performance of the 'task'; the latter regards it as a 'task' which is wholly grounded on the 'gift.' But the deepest reason why 'gift' and 'task' are so especially one lies in the deepest nature of Christianity—in the fact that it is the perfect moral religion; in which phrase at one time the emphasis is on 'religion,' and at another time on 'moral,' but so that the former is the noun and the latter the adjective. Why? Because our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in Him is 'our Father,'

is the alone 'Good,' God the perfect Father (St Matt. v. 48, xix. 17) who is love (1 John iv. 8).

And now, if without the consideration of isolated sayings it is proved from the subject-matter that the idea of the Kingdom of God, the fellowship of created spirits with the God of holy love, and with each other, indicates the highest aim of Christian moral endeavour, as the content of the Christian faith, so it may be affirmed that there are not wanting various single statements in the New Testament, in the words of the Lord as well as of His Apostles, which teach it. And because such express words, as well as the entire witness of the New Testament, are available for a clear understanding among Christians of the highest moral 'Good,' it is essential to define the idea of the Kingdom of God in detail. Previously to, and apart from, the elaboration of individual and social ethics the term remains a blank idea compared with the immediate feeling of value which it possesses for the Christian in its New Testament presentation, and its rich illustration in history and life. It is sufficient to insist on some specially important characteristics of the concept 'Kingdom of God.' Because it is perfect communion with God and man, and rests on the basis of God's love to us, and so everywhere presupposes it, it is essential that this idea of love should be at once so far expounded that its further connotation may not be obscure, and its importance for Christian ethics left in no doubt. Its importance consists in its relation to the highest Good in the supreme command and the deepest of all motives. In Christian ethics love is the 'be-all and end-all,' and this fact awakens at once an impression of its special unity and independent wholeness. Where is there another system of ethics which could express so simply by a word the End, the Norm, the Motive of moral action?

Love is the endeavour of a society of sentient beings to realise from good-will and benevolence, by surrender on the one part and appropriation on the other, some common Ends. In its final ground it is benevolence and surrender, altruism and self-renunciation; for pleasure without benevolence would be selfishness, and benevolence without pleasure would be the



cold fulfilment of duty. Anyhow, there is a strong tendency in common language to give currency to this clear connotation of the concept 'Love.' The longer we consider it the more do we feel that it is an inaccuracy to speak of love of nature, of plants, of animals. And just because the object of such love is not a sentient being, or certainly is not such in the sense of one in common with whom we should realise a common End; and when we nevertheless speak of love in such a connection, we assign feeling to that which is incapable of it, and consciousness to that devoid of it; and so make it an object of actual love in our imagination, or with some sort of conviction that its true nature is hidden from superficial observation. But how heterogeneously conceived is such a notion of love so defined! Yet not more heterogeneous than that which we call natural and religious love. Only what this means must be accurately conceived. Both the pleasure and benevolence, as well as the common End which love desires to realise, may be of a natural or moral kind—and that, too, not only at every conceivable stage, but also in every possible combination. The first; for the common Ends form a richly articulated whole: *e.g.*, help in the guidance of our personal life stands higher than help in the advancement of a single part of our vocation. It is true also that benevolence and pleasure have degrees of strength and persistency without the lower being necessarily non-moral. The second is true inasmuch as I can from purely natural benevolence and pleasure help another in a moral End, or even from moral motive assist him in a natural End. If we have so far only made clear by some examples what a fulness of possibilities real life exhibits (say) in friendship, we have nevertheless gained a conviction of the inexhaustible fulness which that simple formula comprehends. And it is also clear that the higher love, as ethically determined, stands so much the higher, the higher those moral ends are which are striven for in common; and so much the purer is that benevolence and good pleasure—that is to say, the more purely benevolence and good pleasure are determined by that absolute 'ought.' And this can be the case not merely in the form of a moral struggle, but also so that it becomes, as is said, a second nature

(see further on Individual Ethics). But that such love must be persistent and fill the whole soul requires no proof. In the degree in which this is the case, benevolence rises to self-sacrifice, and in this way pleasure attains its highest conceivable satisfaction. And, in fact, whether it happens that love is understood or resisted, or it meets with indifference and resistance, it is by this very means that it grows to maturity. For the whole secret of love is that to give is to receive; sacrifice is gain. This is the unsung song of the poet, the never-exhausted thought of the philosopher, the real wonder of the moral world, but nowhere more simply and grandly uttered than in the saying that "he who loses his life shall find it," to life eternal (St Matt. xvi. 25).

It is to Him who spoke this word that Christian faith, and with it Christian ethics, owes the privilege of seeing in the developed idea of love an essential attribute of God. This idea is an expression for the reality of God in Jesus Christ exhibited to faith; and all that may now adorn itself in the world with the name of love appears to the Christian Church as an effluence of the love of God revealed in Christ. Men know what love truly is because they experience the love of God (1 John iv. 10). Therefore for Christianity the proposition, 'God is love,' is not somehow a metaphorical designation which must be supported and explained by mystical ideas of God as 'the reason and purpose of the world,' as the 'Unconditioned'; nor is love a mere attribute of the 'Absolute.' It is rather that this indefinite idea, 'reason and purpose of the world,' this idea of the 'Absolute'—a term capable of varied connotation—and also the idea of 'absolute personality,' have for the Christian the definite content—Love. Those ideas are needful statements of our knowledge of God, and it is the task of theology to make clear that they are summed up in the proposition, 'God is love.' But we may—nay, we must—confine the given connotative marks of the 'love' of God within the sole limits obvious to Christians, so that we do not wipe out the distinction between Creator and creature. Love between God and man is founded in its commencement, continuance, and completion in the freedom of the divine love. In this meaning the Father is called the

‘Father which is in heaven,’ and God’s love said to be ‘holy,’ exalted above the world. Under this reservation there need be no dread of anthropomorphism conceivable; inasmuch as, when we speak in fact of a common End of His pleasure and His benevolence, we can only speak of these things in the terms which express our own inner experience. It would endanger religion to omit this reservation—that is to say, it would endanger the moral value of the notion, since it would then become a mere empty expression: ‘God is love.’ Therefore we understand why we cannot speak otherwise of God. Of course we think of Him after our image because we are made in His, and because made in the living consciousness that (again to speak humanly) the inner life of God in its formal relations must be to us a mystery, however certainly the meaning of this inner life has been intelligibly made known. And we can prove that those who scoff at this Christian knowledge of God, on account of these limitations, do not afford in our view anything more satisfactory with their idea of an unconditioned absolute.

What may faith then indicate as the purpose which in the fellowship of love is common to us and God? Certainly not something merely natural but ethical. Consequently it does not speak of the love of God to the natural world, but to a nature spiritual and moral. With more particularity, this End of the Kingdom of God is the fellowship of created spirits, who, blessed in the love of God, do on this ground love God and one another as comprehended in Christ. Here in truth there appears to be some obscurity. To love means the furtherance of some common End; the highest common End is the Kingdom of God, *i.e.* the fellowship of love. But the truth is, only in this way does it become quite clear that our God is love. As Luther says: “If anyone would paint God and make it like the original, he must form such an image as is neither artistic nor human, and indeed neither angelical nor heavenly, but just God Himself.” The gods which men form for themselves are gods in the immeasurability of their selfish enjoyment. The true God who reveals Himself to us is God in that He loves and *will* give and offer Himself, *will* pour Himself out and naturally in the inconceivable fulness of His divine reality, in order that

those who are taken into His fellowship and receive gifts from Him may be made rich by giving, by acts of liberality and sacrifice, and thus be like to Him, and in Him find their true life again, in the whole fulness of the capacities bestowed on them; not that this fulness of power constitutes the essential nature of our God, but His love, and this love is in reality our new true being. Just as we may be allowed to speak of a common End of God and of man because God is love, so also the other marks of the notion of love, benevolence, and good pleasure have their highest reality in God's love. It would be necessary to write out the Holy Scriptures to exhaust the characters which are comprehended in this proposition: 'God is love.' This love is His blessedness. There with especial frequency the steadfastness of His love is insisted on. It is 'for ever and ever,' 'before the foundation of the world,' 'God is faithful.' And the accumulation of comparisons, that He loves as Father, Mother, Friend, Bridegroom, and more than all of them, helps us to feel that no such earthly imagery exhausts the personal inner reality and many-sidedness of the divine love. The last-named comparison reminds us how the love of God is perfected in the conquest of human indifference and hostility. It leaves freedom for erring and straying, and follows the most perplexing unfolding of character with longanimity and patience; but it reveals itself most gloriously in love to those at enmity with Him—enmity of the keenest sort, inasmuch as the enemies are sons, who are able to know what love is, and yet refuse its return; and this love even to death becomes the source of a trustful return of love (2 Cor. v. 15). Its really conscious rejection is the morally necessary end of all possible fellowship in love: true love will sacrifice itself to overcome opposition, but it cannot force itself on others, it cannot compel love; for this would no longer be love.

We must ever keep in mind this ideal concept of love as it is only reached in the Christian faith when Christian ethics is spoken of as the highest End of the Kingdom of God, the kingdom of love. It grows clearer from step to step why there can be no higher moral End, and why at every stage its realisation is salvation; and there is no other End which is so completely



Good and so entirely 'the Good' (*cf.* later the exposition of separate sides of this concept, and on the keynote of the Christian character).

*'Legal Right.'*

If love is the holy of holies of the Christian moral world, and on that account needed to be discussed at the very beginning when determining its nature and treating of the notion of the highest Good, here the fore-court of this holy of holies demands brief attention, *i.e.* the idea of *Legal Right*. For a more particular examination all the conditions fail us at present, but it must be mentioned in order that the whole context to which it belongs may not be obscure. For this purpose it is sufficient that we set forth only so much as is admitted of the much-debated and still by no means unanimously conceived notion of legal Right. We therefore mean by legal Right the publicly recognised ordering of the common life of men by the delimitation of individual claims and of the free use of their powers so that respect for all others is incumbent upon each, and at the same time that to each one also is guaranteed the respect due to himself (whether and how far definite possessions are assured by this may now be left out of consideration). By the development of the notion of love it has already been made plain that Law is not the final word, and cannot be the highest thought of Christian ethics, that every over-valuation of systems of Law is only possible at the expense of the Kingdom of God. In this latter is found intrinsic value, unity, freedom; in the former there is externality, multiplicity, coercion. The defect we found in so many systems of utilitarian ethics is that they can by their endeavours issue in nothing higher than mere justice, which in the absence of a deeper foundation and a dominant End becomes in reality often enough merely complete injustice; for how without a secure standard is it to be determined what is right, and make this operative in the absence of love? But in Christian ethics more essential at the outset is the battle against the under-valuation of legal Right. Legal Right is the indispensable presupposition of the fellowship of love, and of the greatest possible exercise of love in compass of influence and intrinsic

contents. This is only conceivable for a multitude of individually diverse human beings existing in space and time under the presupposition of fixed rules of intercourse and of recognised limits of the arbitrary will of individuals. We should, so to speak, not be able to perform any actual action from love if we were obliged in every single case to fix first of all its conditions. Everyday life presents innumerable proofs of this simple truth. The teacher could not influence his scholar at the right place, and at the right time; and just as little the artisan, the merchant, the artist bring his contribution to the highest good, in the absence of Law. Multiplicity of details and incalculable conditions blasting every 'good will' would burden our intercourse in the absence of Law. Love would fall to pieces in mere attempts, in essays dependent on accident, to realise itself in love. Love needs for its successful activity a certain unrestrained freedom of movement and a field of action in some measure prearranged, while of course it is not denied that it is able to win thoroughly effective victories in battle with the most inimical circumstances; by service apparently unworthy of it; by the most insignificant preparatory work; by the clearing away of thorns and undergrowth. But not without reason in the same Acts of the Apostles which shows how the love of Christ triumphed over unrighteous persecution is it boasted, "Then the Church had rest and *was edified*." Yet in this End so far treated the significance of legal Right for Christian ethics is not yet exhausted. It is not merely a presupposition in the external way thus far intended. No! It is also a trainer in love, even when it is only a task-master. The necessity of paying regard to others, the necessity of recognising the claims of others, is a school for the moral will, without which it always remains unskilful in showing real love to others. Consequently it is clear that a system of Law does not owe its origin to sin; but, however much its genesis may be bound up with the requirements of utility, its final ground is moral feeling, the idea of moral fellowship; and consequently the validity of Right has its deepest root in the feeling of an absolute value.

After having shown that the Kingdom of God is the highest aim of Christian moral endeavour and the highest 'Good,' and

for the sake of explaining it defined the notion of love, which lastly made necessary a passing reference to the notion of Right, we now draw express attention to some of the most important aspects of the idea—Kingdom of God.

*The 'Kingdom of God.'*

In showing that the fundamental relations which must necessarily be taken into account in any consideration of the idea of the greatest 'Good' form an inner unity (although they often appear as contraries), we have made at the same time a contribution to the demonstration that Christian ethics is the highest, inasmuch as it avoids the failures of the other great systems, and combines their deficiencies into a higher unity (p. 106). That above all holds good because what is 'moral' implicates a definite relation to one's personal as well as to external nature, and to other human beings; and if the ethical system in question has somehow a connection with religion, it has a relation to God also (p. 15). If we make it clear to ourselves what is the judgment of Christian ethics on this, we then also find a satisfactory answer to further questions; for instance, how to conceive the relationship between the temporal and eternal character of the highest Good, and how to determine the relation of the individual to society. Finally, it is a feature of the Christian doctrine of the highest Good that it does not need in any of these directions to throw a veil over a fact generally curtly dismissed, the contradiction to the highest 'Good,' in the existence of evil and sin.

Our highest good, the Kingdom of God, includes all the above relations, to God, to ourselves, to our neighbour, to the world. When we remember how otherwise it is now our own improvement, now the good of another, now God's honour, now His sovereignty over the world which is emphasised, then we do find remarkable the ease with which they are all recognised in the Christian conception of the highest 'Good.' Let anyone attempt to think any of them away, and every sound Christian feeling rises in resistance. But it is still more remarkable how the variety is combined into a unity. In the harmony of these four fundamental notes the leading ones are

the Great God and our neighbour. Among these God's love stands in the fore-front. 'One thing is needful'; the greatest of all 'Goods' is God. But love to God is not by any means what it ought to be without love of our neighbour. God is indeed love; love does not exist without fellowship in His innermost purpose; he who loves God loves his brother whom God loves. God's love has as its End His Kingdom, which is the union of the many so that they may be one with Him, and with one another. Therefore it is that he who has fellowship with God aims at the Kingdom of God. This fundamental truth is, with complete intention, made the subject of a whole epistle of the New Testament, the first Epistle of St John. *E.g.*, we read (iv. 12), if we love one another, "God abideth in us, and His love is perfected in us." Whether we are to understand 'His love' of God's love to us or our love to God, in either case the significance above mentioned of brotherly love is given to it. God's love to us, which awakens our love to Him, finds its completion in our loving one another; and our fellowship with God is such that we really love those whom He loves, and as He loves. This love to one another is not a second something superadded to our love to God, but the latter completes itself in the former, and is not existent where the former is not. But who can love God and his neighbour without mastering his own nature, and through it the world outside of him? without becoming a person, without gaining a uniting centre and spiritual independence of the many disintegrating and antagonistic impulses and the immeasurable torrent of changing impressions from the external world? Without being a 'person,' and desiring to be such more and more, it is impossible to understand another, to help him, or to personally minister to his well-being. And to love God, who is a Spirit, is only possible for a being endowed with a spirit who desires to be spiritual. And reversely: who can find for himself and in relation to the world gain the freedom of personality without love to God and his neighbour?

In this special unity of the various fundamental relations of ethics in the highest Good of the Kingdom of God we have ground for asserting that it overcomes the antithesis of trans-



cendental ethics and immanent ethics which was of so much importance in the review of the main systems of ethics which are at variance with the Christian conception. It insists more strongly than any other system that the greatest 'Good' is above this world; for God, with whom our fellowship in love is the highest Good, is believed in with all sincerity, not merely as the 'unity of the world,' as its 'reason and purpose,' but as plainly distinct from it, and nevertheless finally Himself in the light of a deeper meditation. There is no room for worldly blessedness; it is only acceptance in that blessedness of the only blessed God which is worthy of that title. And it only becomes actual in men who desire God as nothing but the highest Good; for whom the wealth of this world pales beside God; whose desire aims in such a way at complete fellowship with God, that every earthly advance, however great, in that direction sharpens the longing for its completeness. We cannot weaken the meaning of any of the New Testament sayings which emphasise this truth without sacrificing the essence of Christian morality. It is just on this point that it is of importance not merely to understand but to recognise personally the indispensability and the indestructibility of the sayings of Jesus, impressive enough by their paradoxical form, such as the 'plucking out the eye.' He who has his highest good in that which is above the world, and carries it through as the highest in his struggles with the world, knows that he is also called to that even in the most unlikely place.

And there is just as little room for avoidance of the world as for finding our happiness in it. This avoidance, closely taken, only suits that idea which makes cessation of existence the end of endeavour; the end of Christian morality is the saving of the soul in God's love, and life in this love. Therefore is that utterance, "All things are yours" (1 Cor. iii. 21), as unlimited as that, "I counted all things but loss" (Phil. iii. 7). For the reasons now repeatedly given, God, who is the highest Good, is the God of omnipotent love, by whom, through whom, and for whom are all things (Rom. xi. 36), whose the world is, and whose world wholly and fully serves the purpose of His love—indirectly so far as it contains creatures who find their

destiny in His love; directly so far as it helps them in the realisation of their end, and in this faith knows no bounds. Once more that series holds good: God, neighbour, the personal and external nature. But particularly in its attitude to the latter does it become especially clear how remote the Christian moral Good stands from avoidance of the world. Nowhere else is the natural so completely subordinated as here, but also in no other system of ethics is there such complete freedom given; and if that subordination is recognised so unreservedly recognised. This attitude is only possible if God is God in the Christian acceptance. Only if the highest End of endeavour is the experience of God's love in mutual love, and indeed of a certain endeavour carried to its accomplishment despite all struggles on the basis of that great gift of the love of God—only then can all else be estimated at its true value and neither depreciated nor overestimated; for it is worth just so much as it signifies for that highest 'Good.' No human caprice decides this, but its existence in a world which for faith is God's world, in which all that God has created has its own special value. Without such a highest Good, life is merely dying of thirst for life; small and great forsake the world as disillusionised conquerors; with it, life is a struggle which carries within it the pledge of eternal fulfilment. Certainly in its detailed application to the complex questions as to the significance of civilisation in Christian morality this idea yields many a difficult problem. So much the more is it needful to make it clear in advance how it results from the Christian notion of the highest Good.

That this is a reality we may see in the picture of One who strives for nothing else but to live obedient to the Father, in that Father's love, and who has a firmer footing in this world than any other, while he strives after what is beyond it; who is not of this world and has not his highest Good in this world, but rather is ready at every moment to renounce the whole world and deny himself if the Father so wills; but for whom on that very account the smallest thing is great and eternity is present in the midst of time; whose life, without anxiety, without disgust, with no mere resignation, without ennui, is a trustful

activity, a great victory of life springing from and issuing in eternal life. He is not intended merely as a pattern or as virtue for our imitation, but as a reality of the highest Good for us in the same sense as St Paul's 'to win Christ' can be compared with 'the Kingdom of God,' 'to inherit life.'

There are two words, much misused yet indispensable, which may pass muster as a kind of proof whether the asserted higher unity of the temporal and eternal, of God and the world, in the Christian idea of the highest Good has a truly Christian meaning. I mean the terms mysticism and eschatology. The first of these, of course, merely refers to one of the relations now in question, to the expression of which it has attained through a long course of history. The point now in question is not whether there is such a thing as the immediate influence of the divine on the human spirit, nor even whether any operation of God has of itself given its form to the historic revelation, but rather whether a direct fellowship between God and man apart from his relation to the world may be asserted or not. Indubitably, yes; but only in the sense so far carefully delimited. The very heart of the highest Good for Christian ethics would be taken from it if we in any way weakened the idea that God is Himself the final End of our effort, and that love to God on the basis of His love to us is the one and all. But it is love to God, whose nature is love, whose eternal love no one can in love understand and experience save by entering into the service of His love, where, and as, and when He wills, *i.e.* always, everywhere, and with the whole heart in the actual world which He created and gave to us; involved in this reality we have the certainty that the eternal love of God will ever open up new and still greater realities of life, in the experience of His love for ever and ever. The other word, however, eschatology, does explicitly emphasise the last-mentioned fact, that the present world is only an incomplete stage, a transition: inexpressibly important, for without faithfulness in that there is no higher stage, and certainly not the stage of completeness; not the stage of completeness if we consider that it is perfected only above the present measure of our experience, and do not still assume the same conditions of existence. Therefore, courageous work in this

world because 'it is God's will'; restless activity in the peace of God's love for no moment of this activity is indifferent, or it would not exist at all as certainly as God is God. And there must be no illusion of an earthly perfection. If, in the beginning of a new century, Lavater utters the greeting: "Kingdom of God, the ardent desire of all the good, wilt thou come with the new era?" there is yet a glance raised above the earthly course of time. So the most faithful champions can without disillusion pass to their rest, and others step into the vacant places, with ever-old, ever-new courage. No imaginative picture of a kingdom of God fulfilled on earth scorns their energy, and cripples it if it postpones their hope; but faith in the really eternal Kingdom of God which is not confined within the boundaries of our present earthly experience is the 'victory which overcometh the world.' But once more this faith cleaves to Christ who is exalted above this world because He while here overcame it.

And in the same way the highest Good of Christian ethics surpasses the other systems, in that it is raised above the otherwise irreconcilable opposition of *individualism* and *socialism*. These words are understood in the quite general meaning which forms the basis of their application in the whole of individual and social ethics, and which may be simply defined thus: Individualism subordinates society to the individual; socialism, the individual to society.

In this most general sense socialism exists in all departments. It dominates Plato's view of the state: the rearing and education of children is arranged by the state. In changed historical conditions, to Hegel the state appears as realised moral reason. In that most general sense the Roman Catholic conception of the Church is socialistic: it has a constituted society, a sacred language, and demands the sacrifice of conviction for the sake of the unity of the Church—*e.g.*, after the Vatican's decree of infallibility. In social life the word is especially familiar, but here its proper sense is in reference to the means of production; the individual should be subordinated to the collective whole. But quite apart from such spheres of its application, the term socialism generally means such a mode of



thought as implicates that the individual with his claims should be subordinated to the whole, to society. In the survey of modern competitors with the system of Christian ethics we frequently uttered the reflection that in the utilitarian ethics as in many forms of evolutionary theories the individual does not get his share of consideration.

And we also discovered the contrary in egoistic ethics of the most varied kind, such as the ideal of æstheticism—the individual personality fitting itself for artistic production; and also that of the self-contented philosopher. Energetic champions of Christian ethics have championed systems thoroughly egoistic. “Society,” says Vinet, “is not an organism, but only an arrangement.” “The individual,” says Kierkegaard, “is in truth the only subject of ethics.” And as above socialism, so now individualism in all its special spheres claims attention. There is an individualistic conception of marriage according to which it has its value for the married pair but not for society; of the state too, according to which it is merely the guardian of the rights of the individual; of a state confederacy like that of the ancient German ‘Bund,’ which was much more than a federal state. Individualistic Church organisations are, as the name shows, such as that of the Independents in Holland and England; and even the Evangelical Church of Germany is, on the whole, properly understood, individualistic in comparison with the Romish Church. In the economic question, Adam Smith is the protagonist of our modern socialists.

In reality there can be no such thing as pure socialism or pure individualism. The more thoroughly both are carried out, the plainer do their imperfections become, and the more easily does the one change into the other. In history they alternate in very strange proportions; mostly so that the predominance of the individualistic becomes a tyranny, and that of the socialistic poor and vapid; and also in such a way that each of these sets of epithets may be applied to each. Are we at the present time more socialistic? It is often asserted, and many reasons seem to favour the idea. But the whole democratisation, not merely and not even chiefly, of national and social life, but still more of general opinion, is rather an effort

for equality on the part of individuals who consider themselves equals than a real equalisation in a well-articulated society; and consequently the individuals who overtop others, or think they do, assert themselves in their way with the utmost possible lack of restraint, without regard to society. But, generally speaking, that inner unity which is at all periods esteemed essential, and therefore is said to be 'longed for,' between the individual and society has on the whole remained but an ideal, except in so far as definitely Christian influences have made themselves felt. For instance, the 'human society' of the Stoics, which has real points of contact with one side of our conception of the highest Good, in so far as it means human fellowship in love, has only touched reality to the degree that fellowship with God is its type, its motive power and reason. The ancient and famous comparison of the human body St Paul, as is known, appropriated, but he used it in a deeper meaning than before, and above all so that now what was regarded as an ideal obligation became a real one, because this brotherhood was made an actual fact, and by faith in God the Father in Christ the Kingdom of God was so far realised. In the Kingdom of God the quarrel between the individual and society is made up. For the individual knows that God loves him, and he loves God; he possesses and strives after the greatest Good in its innermost core; he has personal fellowship with a personal God. But he obtains this privilege only when and because he is connected closely with all others who believe in and love the God who loves him; for it is only in the unifying love of all to each that God finds that reciprocal love which fully corresponds to His everlasting love as Creator, in its whole compass, and in the completeness of all its relations. On that account there is no contradiction in it, because each individual who is conscious that it is by God's love that he is awakened to the love of God, loves God in such a way that it is imputed to God when the love of created spirits is said to be a really personal love in return for God's eternal love as Creator. It is not that the love of the individual is as such something imperfect in itself; its limitation arises from man's position as a created being, and he overcomes that limitation, so far

as is possible, by the maintenance of his life in the fellowship of all who love God.

It becomes, moreover, quite plain from this reflection how immense the value of the individual really is. In the absence of the higher unity, Christianity would have to be recognised as individualism. This truth is most simply and impressively expressed in St Luke (xv. 6), "Rejoice with *me*," "*My* sheep which was lost"; and Luther has rightly emphasised the meaning of 'me' and 'mine,' without falling on any contradiction to the 'us' and 'our' of the Lord's Prayer. In the difficult questions arising in detailed ethics, we shall often need to call to mind this great principle. The individual is for God of so great value that it is not proper to allow, even apparently, that the individual gains his value only through society, and not rather that the progress of all social movements depends on individual personalities; all the forms of exaggerating the value of corporate action and of social programmes have light thrown on them by recognising this. And the individual who has his value for the community only possesses this value because, by God's love, he is a 'whole' in himself, and is a growing personality, and as such knows that he is hidden away in God from the fate of earthly perishableness (*v.* 'Character'). Carlyle says: "Men speak too much about the world. Each one of us here, let the world go how it will, has he not a life of his own to lead? One life, a little gleam of time between two eternities. . . . The world's being saved will not save us. . . . We must look to ourselves. . . . And on the whole . . . I never heard of 'worlds' being 'saved' in any other way."<sup>1</sup> Only in a world of heroes can there be faithful obedience to heroic ideals.

When these principles, both in relation to transcendent ethics and immanent ethics and in reference to socialism and individualism, are acknowledged in the Christian Good, the objection that it is only with difficulty that either that notion of individuality which is most strongly insisted on in the sequel, or the recognition of the blessings of civilisation, can be naturally derived from the original sources of our religion, falls to the ground; as does the assertion that they ought rather to

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, 'Hero as Man of Letters,' Lecture V., *Lectures on Heroes*.

be exclusively regarded as new elements of Christian ethics and as a gain of modern life. The question, so far as ethics is concerned, is at the bottom a simple one: either the positions taken have their reason in the nature of the Christian Good or not. A proof from isolated passages of Scripture would be unnatural. So this is not attempted either here or subsequently, but has, on the contrary, been once for all disclaimed.

One result only of what has so far been said may be insisted on briefly. That is, our idea of the highest Good represents an actual whole of graduated aims, *i.e.* it is a system inasmuch as it binds into a common unity all the main lines of moral effort, transcends all that is otherwise called temporal and eternal, and in addition reconciles all that is otherwise irreconcilable, in the claims of the individual and of society, and finally embraces in an articulated whole all the details of all conceivable moral Ends. Our conception of the highest End includes, in itself, all others in such a way that it finds reality in all of them; and it lays hold, not only of that which is above all individual life, but that which is greater than its totality, God, regarded as really distinct from the world. The special sphere in which every individual can make his contribution to the realisation of the highest Good, his contribution to 'the coming of the Kingdom of God,' and in which he is ever growing into a completer personality, is his moral, is his right moral vocation. So that this fundamental notion of individual ethics has its immediate source in a clearly apprehended idea of the highest Good, and does, besides, guard Christian social ethics against all triviality, for all that was ever a real summons to the earthly realisation of the highest End has permanent value even under new conditions of existence. Christian morality does not irritate the merchant or the artist with an oracular deliverance that his work has importance for this world only (*cf.* Richter's *Life*), and this because it recognises a highest End in so strict a sense that it is able to realise itself in every sort of End (*cf.* above on the transcendence and immanence of the ethical ideal).

It would be instructive to consider the various aspects of the



Kingdom of God, as the highest Good in their inner coherence. For it is plain enough that they condition one another. God, neighbour, self, and the world are so bound together in the Christian notion of the Good because this is both transcendental and immanent—is, that is, both above us and in us; and it is only because this is so that the statement above of the unity of graduated Ends holds good. Similarly, the individual and society are, at bottom, only one, as we Christians think, because our 'Good' embraces both the temporal and the eternal, as contrasted, *e.g.*, with the philosopher of the Platonic state, who concerns himself with the mundane affairs of the multitude only when compelled, and until he can once more soar into the empyrean of thought. Only one other important consequence may be expressly mentioned, which arises from all that has so far been said, and that is its universality, since this highest good is realisable by everyone. Distinctions of sex, age, endowment, nationality, social position are not hindrances to the realisation of this Good, are indeed only the means by which it may fashion itself in an innumerable variety of forms. The deep conviction which the greatest of Christian missionaries of the early Church had of this certain truth was clearly one of the strongest sources of his power (Gal. iii. 28; Eph. i.-iv.).

### *Sin.*

But this whole idea of our highest Good remains essentially imperfect if we do not take into our purview its relation to *human sin*. The Kingdom of God, according to Christian faith, is only gradually realised. That is, with the notion of the faith as existing under earthly conditions, and given in a way suited to creatures, its realisation might still conceivably be an uninterrupted progression; but on the contrary its progress is through and in spite of resistance. It is the task of dogmatics to develop the nature of sin in various aspects and the ideas of Christian belief as to its origin. In this subject of ethics we have merely to illustrate the point that the Kingdom of God is realised in thorough-going opposition to a 'kingdom of sin' (Schleiermacher), to the 'world' in the Scripture phrase. The term 'world' has a long history behind it, which answers

closely to that of the term 'Kingdom of God.' If the idea of the 'Church' arose out of the original sense of the term 'Kingdom of God' so 'world' came to mean all mankind not received into the Church. And to the 'Church,' in the special sense used then of the clergy and monks, was opposed the term 'laity.' If the pietists of the Evangelical Church call their circle, with its special aims and tasks, the 'Kingdom of God,' then the 'world' to them is the less earnest members of the Church, who do not participate in their works. Just as little as the term 'Kingdom of God' was understood by those who used these special historical and peculiar significations, just as little do we now correctly use the word 'world.' Its importance for us is merely as the antithesis of the term 'Kingdom of God' in the meaning so far explained.

Self-preservation and self-assertion are natural. This natural desire is only evil, and in relation to God sinful, when maintained against the absolute demand to realise the moral End; and it stands in antagonism to it because it seeks to carry out its natural aims, and not to gain the true End by denial of the merely natural life. The world is the sum-total of all the human beings who act in opposition to the highest End; it is the reciprocal action of evil wills, and, in fact, inclusive of all the conditions which result from their activities. The latter may not be excluded, as the notion of 'offence' (*σκανδαλον*) to be presently considered shows. For instance, take the multiplicity of the arrangements in a modern city, whose whole existence makes up an enormous portion of the 'world,' even considered apart from the human beings, engaged in various activities, but not yet won for the Kingdom of God, who are really only products and, so to speak, mere precipitates of its activity. "All is fruit, and all is seed." We are accustomed to put '*flesh*' next to the 'world.' This term too has its history. There was even a period when it was understood to import almost entirely the sense-impulses in the narrowest meaning, whereas St Paul had expressly conceived it to include not merely envy and hate, but also a perverted relation of men to God. In other respects it is in its way a term as wide as 'world.' In its use it is applied to individuals in the world, and not

merely in reference to their actual sinfulness, but also as referring to their weakness and frailty; by which their susceptibility to worldly influences, and their participation in that reciprocal action above spoken of, is made intelligible though not excusable. In this latter respect the term 'flesh' has not got so definite an ethical impress as 'world'; it does not so exclusively denote a definite anti-moral power, as is illustrated by the saying, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Another reason is, that to no one who has found in the Kingdom of God the highest goal of his endeavour, who is in his earthly development ruled only by this highest aim in all the various decisions of his will, and more, who, ruled by the spirit, has still to combat the flesh—to none such do the Kingdom of God and the world stand as two external antagonistic powers, but the separation between the Kingdom of God and the world exists in every individual soul. What this means it is the business of individual ethics to define more closely. In the same way, in every social circle the Kingdom of God and the world stand alongside each other and mutually influence one another.

As to the form in which the reciprocal action spoken of exhibits itself, the Holy Scripture denotes it by the term 'offence' (σκανδαλον). The woe of Jesus Christ (St Matt. xviii. 7) is pronounced against the world because of 'offences,' because it is a world in which there are occasions of stumbling and temptations to evil. In looking at the interlacing influences of evil wills on one another, and the intermingling of good and evil in the individual self, it is possible to distinguish the character of the 'offence' which is given by considering how far those who give it are evil, and how far they are good. The first kind of 'offence,' which is by far the most inclusive, may be regarded in the most varied points of view, and thus serve to make us aware in some measure of the inexhaustibility of the subject. For instance, such an 'offence' may be caused by wicked design—arising from jealousy of another's higher position, or the desire to draw another into the like depths of sin, as often happens amongst the young,—or from indifference—as when no respect is paid in our action or speech to the feelings

of others, as when in Rome the 'strong' gave offence to the weak by their use of justifiable liberty in eating and drinking (Rom. xiv.); or from a supposed good design—as when St Peter, when he would restrain Jesus Christ from the path of suffering, and the Lord sees in this very thing an attack of Satan. In all these cases the evil, the sin to which the 'offence' leads, is of very various sort. It is either to what is essentially the same sin—as when the impure word calls forth impure fancies—or the selfish deed incites to its repetition. Or it is to retaliation of evil which is itself evil—as possibly a scoff at religious truth may, instead of a return of love on the part of its defenders, call forth an unloving reply, a sinful witness instead of a genuine martyrdom. Most frequently, however, an 'offence' in the general meaning is that which leads to a depreciation of the power of goodness in those who are 'offended.' The ideals of youth wither in the hard battle of life; the demands made on their own will-power, as on that of others, imperceptibly lessen. We are silent at words which once would have excited indignation. We think we are grown wiser, when in truth we have grown more indifferent, and by this want of moral tone we do now offend others in ever-increasing degree and ever-widening circles. For the most part this happens when persons of high position have no inkling of an idea that their 'good form' (according to the average opinion of the world) is a subtle poison to numberless persons, who have not the courage of resistance and to withdraw themselves from this immeasurable 'offence' which surrounds them like the air. We only feel what this world of 'offences' is, in its whole immeasurability, when we, reverting to this point, take note of the fact that it is by no means merely those individual persons who are evil that give 'offence'; but also those who are good do, with what is good, give offence to the evil in that great interaction of influences. Namely, so far as they exert influence on evil persons, who are at the least themselves so far good that they do in some degree feel the value and the intrinsic rightness of the 'good,' and in whom now their antagonism to the good is merely strengthened, if they at any crisis have not the power to give themselves



up to it, or not the moral courage to free themselves by action; and especially by seeking the renewal of their weak will in the strength of the divine will. Commerce, art, science, home, school, state, and church yield speaking testimonies of this kind of 'offence.' The purest intention, the most upright will of him who is fullest of insight, the most amiable act, may give 'offence,' call forth or increase or complete resistance to goodness. The same sun which expands the blossoms and ripens the fruit helps the development of the seeds of disease and of feverous miasma. It is enough to point out that the Pharisees were offended at the miraculous cure of the sick (St Matt. xv. 12); John the Baptist at the unostentatious course of the activity of Jesus, which was the only good way of action (Matt. xi. 6); the disciples at the sufferings imposed on Him by a divine necessity, and not prevented by divine interposition (St Matt. xxvi. 31), so that the cross itself was an 'offence' unparalleled (1 Cor. i. 23). So that by this we can understand Luther's pregnant saying: "Offence here, offence there, necessity knows no law and has no 'offence,'" as a way of speaking of the existence of evil in the arrangements of a God of love.

This whole thought will be still more convincing if we remember that the notion 'world' is on all sides the antithesis of the term 'Kingdom of God.' As the latter is in its innermost core the fellowship of love with God, so the deepest nature of the world is its 'sin' considered in respect of its relation to religion; in all its stages, from indifference to enmity, to which the Holy Scriptures give so many names, and even more illustrative personal examples. As in the Kingdom of God our right attitude to our neighbours follows from a right relation to God, so in the world lovelessness in all its forms and degrees arises from a wrong relation to Him. And finally, it is just the same in reference to our own personal nature and that of others in all conceivable combinations of our relation to God and our neighbour. Nor is the parallel less strong in reference to immanent and transcendental ethics, to individualism and socialism, as well as the system of Ends above spoken of—all are dislocated and disordered. Thoroughly

complex and incapable of disentanglement by human judgment is this whole we call the 'world,' because, as we are compelled to say, there are no clear boundary-lines which separate the world and the Kingdom of God. The points of contact run through each, through the innermost feeling and volition of those who belong to the world or to the Kingdom of God, only discerned by the Reader of all hearts. The adversaries of the Christian ethical ideals note with sharp-sighted acuteness how close is the mixture of good and evil even in those very spheres which stand especially near to the holy of holies of the Kingdom of God—as, for instance, the worldliness by which the Church is often characterised—so that to them there often appears to be nothing left of the actual Kingdom of the 'Good.' The consideration of the question, What is the world? does of itself lead us on to ask still closer what importance this idea has for Christian ethics.

It has the greatest conceivable importance, for there is no other ethical system in which evil is so unreservedly and in so unvarnished a way recognised as the antithesis of the good, and in which still further this deep knowledge of evil is itself only intelligible from a strong faith in the victory of the good. It is by our apprehension, in their whole depth, of the mysteries which lurk in the notions of the 'world' and of 'offences' that the depth of the idea of the 'Kingdom of God,' and more, the depth of its reality, grows clear. Evil is only made fully manifest by its antithesis to the good. In this there is a witness to its power, but still more to the power of the good which is strong enough to overcome the evil that is thus fully revealed. The Biblical expression that sin is a 'lie' excellently expresses this point, for that expression is far from saying that it is not a reality, but rather says that it does not possess a final, the highest reality, which is the 'Good'—or to express it by its antithesis, it is not 'the truth.' In this way it expresses with surpassing simplicity that it is only the 'good' in its deepest ground that is of the most 'value.' The 'world,' the kingdom of sin, is a fearful reality, and yet has only a specious show of reality compared with the Kingdom of God. It proves itself to be this most notably by the fact that it borrows the appearance

of the Good, that it deludes itself with the idea that it ought to strive to attain 'goods' (that are only such in appearance) by following inviolable commandments (that are only inviolable in appearance) from motives that are good merely in appearance. But the pretence is ever dissolving, and will one day finally disappear.

The grandeur of this faith becomes quite plain if we still further reflect that—as doctrinal theology makes clear and establishes—the 'kingdom of sin' is by no manner of means a necessary by-product in the development of the Kingdom of God, or an indispensable means for its actualisation, as a shadow is the inevitable concomitant of light. Sin is not a 'lie' in the sense that it only seems to us to be sin, and disappears in the light of deeper reflection. Sin and guilt are distinguished from 'necessary incompleteness' more strongly in the Christian cosmic view than in any other. If pharisaic Judaism considered itself capable of reckoning up individual guilt, and of regarding evil in the mass as the punishment which God inflicts, yet in its deepest ground such views of sin and guilt were not taken quite in earnest. Still less is this so with the Buddhist notions of sin and guilt. Exaggeration and depreciation go hand in hand, hither and thither, in all shapes in the world outside Christianity. The true idea of the Kingdom of God excludes either of these, however often, in the course of the history of Christian doctrine, the old influences again make themselves felt. The idea of the 'world' as the antithesis of the Kingdom of God cuts away all false excuses and unreal self-accusation alike. The want of self-realisation is not sin. God who is love will not force men into the fellowship of this Kingdom, but draw them, win their free love. Sin is the resistance of the human will to the will of a God of love. And in the kingdom of sin all sin is not the guilt of the individual, however certain it is that there can be no world of 'offences' without human guilt. Guilt concerns sin which the individual could have avoided; but who is there who dare say that he is personally without guilt, and is in no need of forgiving grace, as he needed delivering grace for all his sins? And who can minify his guilt, who has but once honestly shunned all half-real exaggeration of it, and knows that it is

God alone who sees through the mysterious interaction of wills in the kingdom of sin, and yet that the man himself is in his actions involved in it, even if those actions were only those of the inner life, and only consisted of non-compliance with obligation, and above all merely of ungrateful and unprayerful non-compliance? This qualifying word 'merely,' which satisfies the superficial, is a trouble to the upright. Sin is no mere 'veneer'; it is rather a perversion of personality. The turbid dregs rise to the surface when in unwary moments habitual propriety gives way before passion (*cf.* Individual Ethics). It is to this kingdom of sin, known and recognised for what it really is, without exaggeration and without diminution, and, as experience shows it to be, a most powerful reality, that the Kingdom of God stands victoriously opposed—in combat certainly, but in victorious combat, because it is Christ who wins the victory.

For this reason Christian ethics is at once pessimistic and optimistic, but, as we found was the case with the other reconcilable antitheses, so here, in such way that even these are bound together into a really higher unity. The Christian who in his conduct aims at the highest 'Good' of the Kingdom of God has outgrown the self-deception of the ordinary superficial optimism. He can keep in sight the realities in which pessimism grounds itself, and go even deeper down still than it. For he is a convinced optimist for adequate reasons, because he knows the highest existent reality when and so far as he has his place in the Kingdom of God, and in all knows by experience what the coming of God's Kingdom means. Hence a unique uniformity of feeling and judgment associates together, down through the centuries, all who have been convinced by this Christian optimism. Not as if they were unmoved by the waves of the world, which must draw around them most closely for the highest Good's sake. It is not meant that the colour of their feeling, or the absolute content of their judgment, was the same; for what a difference there is between the martyrs of the second century, Augustine, the Reformers, the quietists of the period of the Renaissance and 'the War of Deliverance'! But the one thing that unites them in feeling and judgment is the certainty that they had that a good time was coming; and by



that they never merely meant an earthly future, but eternity. For the Kingdom of God is eternal. They see through all illusions, even those which on this earth surround the Good; but they do not undervalue and depreciate what is good, however mixed up with illusions. No single moral good seems to them to be trifling because it is not the highest of all; but they do not promulgate it as the highest Good, deluding themselves and others. And they labour for this highest Good with the whole force of their personality, and have the earnest faith that their work is not without recognition. Nor do they grieve over the small measure of their success, for they know that their work, as they are themselves, is hidden in the omnipotent love of God.

THE CHIEF COMMANDMENT IS LOVE TO GOD AND OUR  
NEIGHBOUR AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

In the same way that we define the highest End of moral action, so also do we that of the supreme Rule, or the law of moral conduct. And that as well according to its form as according to its content. For the mode and manner of my action is necessarily controlled by the End which I propose to myself. If the Kingdom of God is the highest Good, and this Kingdom is pure love, because God is love, then the all-dominating Rule can only be uttered in one word—love! The fellowship of love can only be advanced by love. And this Christian ‘Thou shalt’ has a quite special ring about it; it is an absolute command of a quite special sort, the love of God in the Kingdom of God is the foundation of our love, and the source of its power. There is no other moral law which is for the Christian so absolute in its requirements as this. The chief commandment for the Buddhist, whose aim is Nirvana, is different from this because the End proposed is different, however similar to Christian love much of its pity may seem; and he cannot feel how severe and at the same time attractive that command is in the absence of the background of motive: “Let us love one another because He first loved us.” Hence the whole meaning which belongs to the idea of Right is different in each system of ethics just according as the highest End proposed is differently conceived. Again, we dare not forget that in

Christian ethics everything depends wholly and entirely on Christ, since He is, as explained before, in the most comprehensive sense, its principle (p. 125). That is to say that in relation to our present problem Christ is the personal ideal embodiment of the Christian moral law; the supreme commandment of the Kingdom of God is for us the example of Christ.

We may find an aid to clearness in speaking of all these chief questions of the meaning of Right as a term in Ethics by recollecting that this most important point of view in all ethical reflection has at one time been exaggerated, and at another time had too little importance conceded to it. Now, as Christians we are convinced that Christian ethics offers more than either of these partial views; that it rises above legalism which is the exaggeration, and antinomianism which is the undervaluation, of law; and that its real value naturally finds expression in the statements which explain the law in its form and content. The genuine Christian moral attitude towards the law receives illustration from the fact that in the Christian Church at one time legalistic influences have been predominant, and at another time antinomianism. We are obliged to call the Roman Catholic conception of morals legalistic. The Council of Trent expressly anathematised the proposition that 'Christ is not a law-giver.' Legalistic too is that obedience to the letter of the law of many sectaries during the first struggles of the Evangelical Church, against which even the Augsburg Confession of Faith pronounces its disapproval (Art. 6, 16, 20).<sup>1</sup> Legalistic are many statements and methods of thought of the old pietism as they are discussed in Spener's *Theological Reflections*.<sup>2</sup> Not only did the ancient Church, on the other hand, charge its Gnostic opponents with antinomianism, but also Rome the

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 170, 174, 178, *Sylloge Confessionum*. Clarendon Press, Oxon., 1827.  
—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> The works alluded to were published by Spener in 1700-1702 in 4 vols.; and (after his death) in 1711, 3 vols.: *Theologische Bedenken*. Spener (1635-1705) was the originator of the Pietists in the Lutheran Church, whom Tholuck speaks of as "one of the most spotless and purest among the distinguished persons in the Lutheran Church in the seventeenth century," as well as the most useful. See Tholuck, *Geschichte des Pietismus*,—Tr.

Reformers, and the Reformers the sectaries, when under the title of the 'freedom of the spirit' they praised what was really carnal licentiousness. That æsthetic personal culture which in the name of artistic originality casts aside ordinary morality is antinomianism. These few examples show how very various are the applications of the terms legalism and antinomianism. In the main and on the whole it is clear that up to the time of the Reformation Christian ethics, according to the judgment of the Reformed Church, was inclined to the former, and the Evangelicals, in the opinion of their Roman opponents, appear to lapse into the latter; while it, on its own part, claims to be a return to the Gospel which stands clear of these contradictions. As to the reason why legalism appeared so early in Christianity and endured so long, later researches have shown that it is scarcely accurate to find it in Jewish pharisaic elements, or in the reflex influence generally of the Old Testament, and on the other hand to assign all that is antinomian to the influences of Greek civilisation. This Greek world was in another way inclined to see in Christianity the new law which leads to life.

*The Meaning of the Law.*

This may in Christian ethics be shortly put thus: If we look back to the doctrine of the highest Good, and especially to that of the deepest Motive of action, we shall see that by the conception of the Kingdom of God, as already set forth, all idea of a meritorious attainment of the highest Good by fulfilling the law is excluded (against all legalism); equally so is that idea that it can become a personal possession without fulfilling the law (against all antinomianism). If we have rightly defined our highest Good (p. 127), if the Kingdom of God, the fellowship of love to God and our neighbour, is the aim of our endeavour, by reason of God's love to us, and if it is thus a continually increasing task to be performed, arising out of a gift bestowed, how can it then be said that we merit the love of God? Does a child merit the love of its parents? It is able to love because it is loved. But it is equally true to say that the child can only really experience the love of its parents in loving fellowship with them by returning their love.

And further, another side of the same truth is important. Can we earn a 'good' which is of another sort than the act by which we earn it? If the highest Good, the goal of moral endeavour, were a heaven of earthly delight, there would be a sense in which it could be spoken of as something to be earned. But if it is fellowship in love with God and man, if the new heavens and the new earth are that wherein dwelleth righteousness, if, that is to say, endeavour and aim are of the same kind, then every step on the way forwards is an attainment of the goal, and the ultimate goal cannot possibly be reached in any other way. But there is no sense in speaking of desert in connection with it. In each respect the Roman Catholic doctrine of the meaning of the law is a perversion of the Gospel, however much it may insist that merit is only possible on the ground of grace. Since it asserts along with this that eternal life is the reward of merit, it injures the idea of the free grace of God, which St Paul speaks of: "Otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 6). And in addition, eternal life must in its nature necessarily be something different from that which constitutes the character of moral action; or, so far as both are really homogeneous, it is merely in the negation of this world, renunciation of its claims, reception into the ineffable divine nature, concerning which nothing definite can be affirmed, except that the real divinity of this ideal at any rate is not that which consists of love. On the other hand, of course, we of the Evangelical faith have not always unreservedly acknowledged that without the performance of the divine will, without the fulfilment of the law, there is positively no salvation. Just because the goal striven for is of the same character as the rule of conduct which guides on the way, and just because grace is grace, and the fellowship with God opened to us is the fellowship of love, there is no participation in this highest Good in the absence of obedience. In their aversion to legalism the Evangelical Churches, at any rate the Lutheran Church, have not always in this matter kept themselves free from antinomianism. They rejected the extraordinary proposition that good works are detrimental to salvation, and insisted that there is no genuine faith without works; but they shunned the statement that they are necessary



to salvation, even in the quite indispensable and quite innocuous sense which follows from what has been thus far explained (*cf.* Formula of Concord, 2 pt., 4. 24 ff.). If salvation is the salvation of God who is love, it cannot be separated from love. Otherwise there arises a contradiction (which is only with difficulty concealed) to clear statements of the New Testament which once and again connect plainly salvation with the performance of good works (*cf.* St James i. 25 and St Matt. xxv. 1 ff.). Without this admission, too, it is not easy to think of the highest Good as ethical. In individual ethics it is to be shown more particularly how little insistence on this truth detracts in any degree from the full meaning of free grace and 'salvation by faith only.' And here too the significance of the law will grow plainer if we speak of the form of the law.

### *Form of the Law.*

Here again the Evangelical doctrine on the antithesis between legalism and antinomianism is maintained. Two important points are in question:—*First*, the law of God, as it concerns Christians, is not a number of single commandments, which have been once for all established in a statutory form, which demand single good works, but the entire will of God, which demands from every individual in his own personal circumstances a special good character and a special mode of life which is a unity in itself (*cf.* 'Duty,' 'Calling,' 'Virtue,' 'Character,' below), and by means of which each makes his contribution towards the realisation of the Kingdom of God. This is opposed to all that is merely legalistic in its nature—*e.g.*, to the 264 prohibitions and the 284 precepts of the rabbis, the 10 divine and 9 ecclesiastical precepts of the Eastern Church, the 10 commandments and 5 ecclesiastical precepts of the Roman Church. What a simplification there is in the answer of Jesus Christ recorded in St Mark xii. 29; in the word of St Paul, Rom. xiii. 8 ff.; and the 'new commandment' of St John xiii. 34 ff.! And let us think too of the 'work' which Jesus finished, and in which His work is perfected; of the work for which St Paul relinquishes all, and in which he becomes the Paul we know; which in the most insignificant calling gives an eternal value to the obscurest life!

And further, as opposed to all antinomianism, the divine law is in the infinite variety of its application to every individual life and in its illimitable suitability to the exigencies of changing times by no means a mere indeterminate Norm, but one set in sharply defined outline, as, *e.g.*, is shown by St Mark xii. 29 ff. In fact, it is only thus that it can be an all-embracing Norm, applicable to every individual situation, and yet a definite rule of moral conduct.

*Secondly*, the law is not a demand which is heterogeneous to and in antagonism to the will of the Christian, which turns on blind obedience, and seeks to ensure this obedience by the fear of punishment and hope of reward; but a demand which makes its appeal to the true nature and destiny of man. It is man's own law, which is the known way to the End known to be the best End, "the image of that which he ought to be." This is against all legalism, or in this particular case hetero-legalism, as if the moral law could be something heterogeneous to the human will. But again it is against all antinomianism. This law of the 'Good' is not carried out by a kind of naturally necessitated action, but turns on a responsible will, on a real 'Thou shalt,' and this at all stages of the Christian life right on to the last test of faithfulness. And in fact only thus can it be a moral command which is concerned with a will.

Both propositions on the unity and definiteness, the subjectivity and inviolability of the law are essentially and mutually interdependent. A law which is recognised by the inner man must be a unity; and the reverse. And we must think of this when we assert that in Christian morality everything depends on the disposition, and it is on this account that it is a righteousness which is better than that of the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus Christ demands in every true man.

The true knowledge of these propositions, inseparable as they are from the principles of Evangelical ethics, and powerfully as Luther has borne testimony to them as one who had become free from the law, and had embraced the law of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 21), has not always found unambiguous expression. The first of these principles, *e.g.*, is prejudiced by the reformed idea of the Sabbath commandment. The greatest respect for the English

method of its observance, which has become a national habit, the most yearning desire to secure this blessing in a suitable form for our own country of Germany, must not be allowed to prevent us declaring that to ground it on the Decalogue is not strictly Evangelical. Not merely because in that case, to be consistent, the seventh day must be observed, since there can be no changing and strained interpretation of single portions of a valid commandment, which is to be literally followed. Rather is it to be interpreted in the light of the 'freedom' with which Christ has made us 'free' (Gal. v. 1), and the fact that the observance of Sabbath days is expressly considered superfluous (Cor. iii. 16). This reason is also decisive against the attempt to trace the observation of Sunday back to the Mosaic law, and to secure it as a constituent part of the original order of God at the creation; supposing that anyone now finds a single express commandment in the narrative at all. All such mist scatters before the clear sunshine of Luther's explanation (*Catechism*, iii. 78 ff.) how the observance of Sunday flows as an external arrangement from obedience to the command of love to our neighbour, and how the true sanctity of Sunday as a means for the furtherance of the spiritual life obtains a safer guarantee than by any reliance on the letter of the law. In regard to our second proposition, the latest confession of the Lutheran Church has not given a wholly adequate expression to the Evangelical principle of Luther; but as regards this 'third use of the law,' as it is styled, it may be spoken of more particularly in connection with the doctrine of sanctification.

All that is to be said of the form of the law is embraced in the words of the royal law of freedom (St James ii. 8, 12), or of the law of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 2). Freedom from the multiplicity of single precepts and from all external coercion, but freedom for the good and in the good, which constitutes our true destiny, is really royal. The natural man, the flesh, is enslaved under the yoke of a law foreign to his true nature, torturing him with a thousand demands. The Spirit which is from God, fellowship with whom is our aim, brings the scattered fragments into a unity, and changes force to freedom. And all that which systems of ethics previously to Christianity, or

external to it, have imagined of the nature of the absolute law here finds its fulfilment. Hence here once more that which was said at the beginning of the nature of ethics must be called to mind (p. 10). But why?

*Content of the Law.*

The answer to the question only becomes clear by considering what this content is. If we have above rightly stated the highest Good of Christian ethics, there can be no doubt as to the content of the highest Norm. It is love of God and our neighbour (St Mark xii. 29 ff.). For so, End and way, the Good to be striven for and the Rule of endeavour, generally correspond to each other. But this correspondence is, on account of the nature of its highest Good, the closest in Christian ethics. How then could the kingdom of love become real by any other kind of action than by love? For instance, by this it is impossible that all action should be mere denial of the natural impulses, action essentially ascetic, though it is as certain as the kingdom of heaven itself that its supreme commandment must be directed with sharp severity against all unspiritual worldliness. The only question that raises a difficulty is whether we can alongside love of God and our neighbour speak of love of self. Occasion for this question is given by the commandment, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," and in the history of Christian ethics it has been much discussed. One thing is clear anyhow, and that is, that love of self cannot be spoken of precisely in the same sense as love of our neighbour, for love presupposes fellowship between different persons. At the same time it is easy to understand that self-denial for the sake of some personal high purpose has moral value. We condemn him who throws himself away in uncontrolled, blind obedience for another's will and pleasure just the same as we do the selfish man. If we ask more particularly as to the measure and manner in which each one ought to realise himself, and, so to speak, love himself, no answer can be given different from that which follows from the axioms on the relations between society and the individual (p. 141). We can neither injure our own personality from love to another, without injury to that other, nor put social considerations in



the background from self-love without injury to oneself. If the latter is immediately obvious, the former is confirmed a thousand times over in daily life. If Jesus Christ, through a weak sentimental love to all the world, had not asserted Himself in His battle with the Pharisees, He would have endangered His incomparable life-work, His unique life-work. He was hated because He would not call evil good, and overcame hate by love; but the contempt which falls on him who does not know what he means would have rendered this victory impossible. Or in the limited circle of domestic training, compliance under all circumstances and renunciation of personal self-respect out of pretended love is destructive of moral influence; it is only apparently love. So marvellously are the individual and society bound together in the kingdom of love that both can only reach their goal in union with one another. Genuine self-love, if the equivocal term must be used, is then the will of each man to become a satisfactory member of the Kingdom of God, a moral personality in fellowship with God and his neighbour, and to train himself so to be.

In this way it becomes clear that the idea of self-love does not belong here at all; it is no side-piece to the love of God and our neighbour; rather, in so far as it possesses an unpugnable meaning, it has already been elucidated when we settled the relation between the individual and society. Here the only question with which we are concerned is that love to God and to our neighbour cannot be thought of disconnected from a right relation to our own nature and to a nature external to us; but for this purpose the phrase self-love is plainly as unsuitable as possible.

*Love to God* is the supreme command as certainly as that God is the chief Good, and therefore love with the whole heart. Nothing else can take the place of this love; everything else gains its value from it. St Paul says that renunciation of property and giving our body to be burned is worthless without love to our neighbour; but the same thing is true if this is not also love to God—of course an impossibility if we understand what Christian love of our neighbour means (see below). Whatever that is glorious was said of love, when we spoke of

God's love to us (p. 133); of whom it is said, "God is love." The same is true in a figure of our love to Him called forth by His love to us. Here is unequalled satisfaction and unparalleled self-sacrifice; here is a true fellowship which aims at the same single, grand End, the eternal God; and of this eternal love stooping to the bounds of time, we ourselves are partakers in time and in eternity: "As He is, so are we in this world." Hence all descriptions of love to God are merely weak words, even that well-known explanation: "To love God is to take God as the chief Good; to cleave to Him with our hearts; to be ever mindful of Him; to be ever desiring Him; to find the greatest satisfaction in Him; to give ourselves up wholly to Him; and to be ever zealous for His honour."

But against this explanation doubts have been raised by those who question the notion of love to God generally, or certainly essentially delimit it. Nay, it has been said that the Holy Scriptures keep the notion of the love of God in the background, and not without reason. This latter statement is, of course, in view of St Mark xii. 29 f. and Rom. viii. 28, somewhat extraordinary, and completely so if we take St John's first Epistle into account. But, notwithstanding, the warning to be careful is not without reason. The doubt in the final ground touches a point which we have been obliged to pay regard to when speaking of the chief Good. These doubts take their rise in the anxious fear lest a false mysticism may foist itself into Christian ethics (p. 142). In this place this objection has a twofold significance. First, thus: It is said that love to God consists according to its nature not in any direct relation to God, but on the one hand in our love to our neighbour, and on the other hand in a devout attitude to all the events of life, in childlike trust in God's paternal Providence. But this is going right back to the explanation of the question, What is loving God? And on this point there can be no disagreement that a love to God which is not love to our neighbour, and which does not, in humility and patience, make the best use of God's ways, is a hypocritical imagination. On this point much has already been said, and will be often said in the application. It is hence quite in order if all the

separate aspects of love to God are expounded in a closer examination, and determined in their mutual relations. But, all this presupposed, there still remains the inalienable right to insist how, in the words 'love to God,' the real question is as to an actual personal fellowship with God whose nature is love; and how it is in this alone that the reason is found for a trustful acceptance of divine providences, and the duty of loving our neighbour. Both have a meaning, because the Christian is permitted to love God who first loved him; he is allowed to aim at this most valuable reality—but how poor are such expressions!—personally to make a personal return of love for the love personally shown to him; a love "directed not to the gifts but the source of the gifts" (St Augustine). And this is so because he "regards God as the chief Good, and can find in Him the highest happiness"; and what more is mentioned in that explanation, which in its final statement reminds us, as forcibly as needfully, how brave also that love to God, if it is to be really genuine, must be in its zeal for the honour of the holy divine love.

And this last remark may at the same time show that also the other side of this objection, that the expression 'love to God' has a false, mystical ring in it, can be disposed of. Many are afraid that by its use the essential distance between God and the creature is obliterated, and that a falsely confident and flippant idea of sensuous love degrades the purity of the relationship between God and man. Hence, it is said, instead of speaking of love to God, generally it would be preferable to speak of trust in God. In reference to this anxiety it may simply be said, misuse need not prevent the right use. According to the verdict of Church history, the misuse has been manifold; there has been a predilection for the use of falsely interpreted words of the Song of Solomon. But it is possible to misuse the term faith. Not merely a cold vagueness, but also irreverential confidence in the compelling power of prayer, have been allowed to be called faith. Allowing that love to God still remains an invincible idea, on this very account, because without injury to the deepest reverence, and indeed rather by means of reverence that humbles and

exalts, the truth receives unmistakable expression, how fervent without sentimentality is that love to God which lives in this genuine feeling: "This is my joy! that I draw near to God"! He who would deny that, may be invited to rewrite the Psalter as the hymn-book of the Christian Church of all times according to his principles. Certainly, it will always be a special touchstone of the modesty of devotional language, whether those who use it fear, love, and trust God always in the right place, and employ none of these terms separate from their inner connection with each other. For, rightly understood, all trust, all faith even as mere acceptance, is a readiness to receive, a drawing nigh to God because He draws nigh to us, a response to His word. All love to God, even the highest conceivable joy in Him, abides in confidence and self-giving; neither faith nor love is ever without reverence and reverential humility in view of His 'unspeakable gift.' Hence, in harmony with this (reverential) loving faith and (reverential) believing love are spoken of. But here in ethics, where the question is as to the realisation of our God-given destiny, we speak, following the words of Jesus Christ, of love to God; of belief in doctrine when it explains how all our doing is grounded in God's work for us. Hence we have later on to speak in detail of the relation between 'faith and works,' *i.e.* of how far then the love of God as the experience of faith is a motive to the love of God and our neighbour and the source of its power.

The last consideration may also remind us in what especial sense the expression 'love to Christ' is justifiable in Evangelical ethics. Facts—like those periods in the history of the Moravians which proved to be times of sifting—show with especial clearness the close danger in both the respects above discussed. If we are conscious of its possession, and are ever mindful that love to Christ is love to Him in whose love humanly brought near to us and His love to the death the love of the Father is now operative in us, we dare not measure out and narrow down the peculiar force and fervour of such love by paltry precepts. Its charter of freedom is the question, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (St John xxi. 15).



The command of love to our neighbour (St Mark xii. 29 ff.) is called the second commandment, and like unto the first of love to God. Instead of many commandments there is only one, and that can only be love to God. But with this love to our neighbour is so closely connected that only as the companion to the first can it be called the *second* commandment; which, on account of its inner relationship and even unity with the first, is not really a second; and, surely with reason, is together with the first called the ‘only commandment,’ in order that it may suffer no misinterpretation, but acquiescence in its true tenor. After what we have said as to the highest Good (p. 138), this state of the matter needs no fresh explanation. God is love, and this is the irrefragable reason why we have received such a command that “he who loves God should love his brother also.” But the mode and measure, the compass, of Christian love to other men we have still to explain with more particularity.

In respect of its *Mode*, Christian love is fellowship for the advancement of the highest common End, *i.e.* the Kingdom of God; its reason is not found in natural benevolence and beneficence so far as the person beloved and the person loving are ‘the natural man,’ with rich or poor gifts, and in necessities of whatsoever sort; but in that benevolence and beneficence which have a Christian moral quality; because each one knows that he, with the object of his love, has been called by the love of God to an eternal fellowship of love; called, too, each in his special natural endowment, through the multiplicity of the forms of which an immeasurably rich and articulated whole of associated men can, in the love of God, arise. This Christian love is, therefore, in the way it exhibits itself, essentially different from all that has, in the moral history of mankind, borne the name of love, because its End and Motive are different. It is a long, tortuous path from that obscure benevolence and sympathy, joined with selfishness and struggling emotions, to Christian love, which in its innermost core is care for souls, advancement in that “eternal share in His abiding place.” Even a high stage of this moral development is that sense of wisdom which says: “When injured, be reconciled; but if treated with

contumely, revenge yourself! Bear trifles from your neighbour, but it is slavish to put up with base treatment; but blameworthy not to be moderate in revenge." There are deeper tones than these, as the Platonic word: "It is better to suffer than to do wrong," or the Sophoclean: "It is not for mutual hate, but for mutual love that I am here." These are almost prophecies of Christian love of our neighbour. No Christian will undervalue the Buddhist pity; and in the humanity of modern society he sees fruit from the same root, and a continual and needful spur to his own perfection; and more, a wholesome mirror of shamefaced self-examination. But how far the greatest of these sayings are behind the full content of the Christian conception of love, this humanity itself shows when it counts with much assurance on persons who are Christianly disposed for the performance of many of its services of love, while it perhaps ridicules their faith. Other services are left entirely to them because this humanity finds in them nothing which has sense or value for it; apart altogether from the idea of power to perform such deeds as the succour of those who have fallen by the fault of society, the castaways of society—the salvation of the lost into a new and eternal life. Christian love of our neighbour is, as to its character, wholly determined by God's love to us; it has here not merely its reason and motive power, on which we must speak when dealing with Motives, but also its example. In its warmth and clearness it is that of the great sun of love which rises on the evil and the good, in order that all may be perfect as the Father in heaven (St Matt. v. 48).

The *measure* of our Christian love to our neighbour is only intelligible in this same way. It cannot be defined more simply, deeply, inexhaustibly than in the saying of the great commandment in St Mark xii. 29, "as thyself." The final motive of self cannot be more severely condemned while yet the indispensable right of the real self is recognised. But this negation of egoism, and at the same time of all exclusive and indeed impossible self-sacrifice, has meaning only because in the chief Good, and on that account also in the chief commandment, as we saw, society and the individual no longer separate themselves as antagonistic to each other, but become truly one in God; and can only

possess and love God when they become mutually united in love, blessed in the service of self-denial.

It is no otherwise with the *extent* of Christian love of our neighbour. It is in real earnest universal love of mankind, and knows no distinction of race, age, position, nationality, religion, or of natural gifts (Gal. iii. 28 ff.). Nevertheless the term 'love of our neighbour' has a quite pre-eminent significance. It is not merely only the most cheerful but also the most accurate conceivable. For it is a reminder that the universal love of mankind can only become real for every individual in every single item of his action in his special situation, in a quite special way, if quite distinct human beings in their special position are in need of his love and can be reached by it. It is the enduring protest against mere phrases, the continual demand to give the case of the individual amid the encircling millions individual care in real earnest. It is just this modern humanity that is in danger of treating in a way that is at bottom loveless individual specimens of the human race, for whose love, elevation, and advancement it professes enthusiasm. Universal love of mankind "often draws the line at the unwashed." That saying wards off self-deception and the deception of others, as found in St Luke (x. 29, 36), "Who is neighbour to him who fell among thieves?" Properly understood, everyone has neighbours in space and time. He is, too, a true neighbour to them by his loving action. These must be led to experience it, and, as the result of the experience on their part, be ready where and how they can to help others in the best way. Thus Jesus became neighbour to His disciples, and awoke in them a love which 'constrains' them without reserve to His service (2 Cor. v. 14). It is not by a "mass of love that He combated the misery of men," but He exercised on one person after another that love which put and solved the question of eternal life, and which overcame the world. Social ethics has to show how all our natural moral relations and all forms of society, family, friend, nation, place, and all that is material, offer occasions for such Christian love. Every merely general proposition is poor compared with this wealth.

The inexhaustibility of this love of our neighbour is revealed

by a glance at the manifold stages of its realisation. The two limits are brotherly love and love of our enemy. When the love of our neighbour is understood and returned, it finds its completion in brotherly love, of whose praise the New Testament is full. To maintain and to renew it in new forms is a pressing problem of the present time. Rejected Christian love finds its completion in the love of our enemy—that indispensable proof whether our love corresponds to its divine type. He who loves his foe holds energetically to his design to advance another in the highest End even when he, so far as in him lies, runs counter to our highest End; to help him in his endeavours even, if so it must be, by the sacrifice of his own natural life—and herein he maintains and gains his true life. When we have thoughtfully considered the idea of God's love (p. 164), then all this is seen to be indisputable. For instance, the idea that the demand to love our enemy is to be conceived on an eschatological basis, because in the near dissolution of all earthly society even the antagonism of our enemies does of itself cease to be an evil, is the greatest conceivable misconception of the word of Jesus Christ. This would be no ethical foundation even for the lower stages of moral development. It is of most service to the introduction of the Christian ideal into actual life to bear in mind at present how far between these two limits it moves hither and thither, how far in general righteousness is from being the norm which is still to be realised. But if such righteousness does not issue from and aim at love, this latter still remains for Christians among its high ideals.

Inasmuch, however, as the commandment of love to God and our neighbour cannot be fulfilled in the absence of a right relation to our own nature and to external nature, we have now in this place to speak, although briefly, of *the attitude of the Christian to his own nature and to that of the world*. The moral culture of the natural powers of our minds, in thinking, willing, and feeling; their continuous and unified employment in the realisation of Ends; their control by the sense of personal dignity, even if only obscurely felt, had to be mentioned at the outset when the question under consideration was that of the one chief regulative principle of all moral life.



How these powers of the soul are collected into a unity is explained in our treatment of the Christian character. Their relation to the physical life, the normal attitude of the Christian to it, requires notice in our present context. What this attitude should be, will again be most clearly shown by contrasting the overestimate and underestimate of its value. The overestimate is seen in a twofold form, that found in Grecian æstheticism, and that in modern materialism, however far these intellectual tendencies are distinct and separate. In the former we find unrestrained æstheticism, the absorption of the powers of body and soul with objects of beauty; in the latter, what we call spirit is merely the combined effect of 'force,' which is one with matter, according to those who, weary of pure thought, are worshippers of physical science posing as an explanation of the cosmos. As to the underestimate, this may appear in the form of Buddhistic or monastic asceticism, or as spiritualism of some sort. The Christian, in spite of all the unsolved mysteries (2 Cor. v. 1), which he realises more personally than those who do not know the highest life by faith in the omnipotent love of the Father, knows that his body is (apart from sin) (1 Cor. xv. 45 ff.) the God-designed instrument and outward embodiment of the soul, and designed to be a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 3 ff.). The highest life is not the physical, sensuous life, but that of the personality; but the former is the divinely intended means of realising the latter. God and the Christian who loves his neighbour are to bring this instrument to the fullest perfection; and also here it is true that, the more complete is the subordination of all means to the highest End, the more does the special significance of these means for this End become clear. Bodily exercise (1 Tim. iv. 8) "profiteth a little," *i.e.* compared with discipline in godliness; but that it is important in its sphere is repeatedly insisted on in the New Testament, often in the same contexts which warn against excess (1 Tim. v. 23; Col. ii. 23). This bodily exercise is according to its nature as much discipline as a means of health, a check to sensual impulse as well as its proper satisfaction and education. A warning like that of Rom. xiii. 14, "Make provision for the flesh, (but) not to fulfil its lusts,"

is applicable to both deviations from the right way, that of depriving the natural life of its divinely ordered rights, and that of asserting them at the expense of the chief Good. The saying of Rothe has a deep meaning: "Sinful man has too much and too little sensuality." In the kingdom of sin the physical life is sick in all forms and degrees, with and without the fault of the individual person. Depression and excitement, insensitiveness and sensibility, strangely intermingled, alternate in the same man. These frames of mind intrude even into the holy of holies of prayer. Who is there who is not weak in some point? There are many who would found a society in which the word 'nerves' should never again be uttered. Anxiety for the maintenance of bodily health lays hold of them like an infectious disorder; the doctor takes the place of the pastor (understood not merely in an official sense). But with this anxiety there is conjoined a readiness to live regardless of health in eagerness for enjoyment, in the most reckless accumulation of business engagements, and so undermine health, and then seek its restoration by unnatural means; while even noble attempts at counteracting this tendency are in part scarcely less artificial. There is a want of "soundness in the good will," as Rothe says. If that were present the bodily appetites would largely adjust themselves; if not, there would be the power and willingness "to live suitably to our environment," and even to make suffering—far from all crass want of sensitiveness—into a work of faith and love; with the eye fixed on Him who will glorify our "body of humiliation" (Phil. iii. 21). That these propositions are not in themselves a guarantee against unloving judgment on others, or senseless severity to ourselves, is in need, as the whole context shows, of no elucidation.

As to its principle, we have already spoken of the attitude of the Christian to external nature and to the world (p. 139). The law of the Christian life which emerges is, however, more easily explained in detail elsewhere. It may merely be mentioned that the expression 'love' of nature, and especially love of animals, is, as regards Christian ethics, and in connection with love of God and of our neighbour, unsuitable. It does not fit in with the true idea of love. Joy in nature is not love. Our right

relation to the animal world has its origin rather in reverence for the Creator and a fellow-feeling for our fellow-creatures (Prov. xii. 10; Jonah iv. 11). The present day often shows, in the same degree that genuine love of mankind is wanting, a weak tenderness in regard to animal life; a descent from the soundness of the feeling which Christianity sanctions to Buddhistic flabbiness. For instance, the deep revolt against animal torture, under the mask of science, from vanity and coarseness of feeling becomes without reason a deep-seated aversion to all experiments on living animals, even in the service of purposes that are higher; and the exquisite titillation of over-excited nerves in certain forms of sport leads some to the rejection of all sport whatever. Yet the latter example does at the same time show that when we enter upon details we soon enough reach the boundaries, which in the common judgment are drawn by the rights of the personal conscience.

Everything that is to be said of the supreme Norm of Christian moral action is embraced illustratively in the

### *Example of Christ.*

The precept of love cannot be completely expressed by any formula. Without illustration the notion is in great danger of being an empty expression. The old motto: "Precepts teach, examples follow," belongs, in fact, also to the doctrine of Motives, but necessarily at the same time to that of the Rule, the law of Good. And if this is true in every system of ethics, it is especially so in Christian ethics, on account of the nature, content, meaning which the law implicates. In this sense, too, it is true that Christ is the principle of ethics (*cf.* p. 125). Jesus Christ is the type of the 'Good,' as it exists in God's eternal nature, and in the form of a human personality. He is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15), and so the image of the personal life of man in which He was created (1 Cor. xv. 45), after which he, as sinful, is to be renewed (Col. iii. 10). Understood in this way, Christ is the moral law incarnate, although He is no new lawgiver, as the Tridentine Council (6. 21) asserts with emphasis against the Protestant. For everything that we have said of the law of the 'Good' is in His person

a reality, and He illustrates this reality in all its relations, both as to form and content. It is in Him that we see what is meant by the law of the 'Good' not being a sum of single precepts but the sole will of God. Every moment is occupied by the great work which the Father gave Him to do, but every moment we may also say just as in that work He ever alike aims at the one goal which stands before Him: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (St John xvii. 4). Hence for Him too this law is a law of freedom; what He does and what He leaves undone both have their springs in His inmost spiritual nature; His life is so much a life of obedience to the Father that He can call it His "meat and drink" (St John iv. 34). But it is a real command that He follows, which He must fulfil through conflict (St Matt. xxvi. 42): "Not My will, but Thy will." And what this will is, is comprised for Him in the content of the greatest commandment. He came by the love of God to save men for God's love. That He can only accomplish by loving to the end, God, and 'His own' because He loves the Father. Everything serves this love which is proper to His image, with its strongly marked features of self-denying and world-renouncing zeal. Jesus is consequently no mere ascetic. He protects His disciples against the exacting demands of ascetical precepts. He fights against the special, individual 'prescripts' which were made in the name of religion, and which find their force merely in such sayings: 'Touch not, handle not.' He was compelled to hear the scoff of His foes, that as contrasted with St John the Baptist He was 'a winebibber.' He is no ascetic, because He is more than the greatest of them, the 'Son,' who at all times does the good pleasure of the Father whose almighty love sanctifies and does not sacrifice and destroy the world. This is not a mere utterance of faith; historical investigation is more and more forced to this conclusion. Yet there are some at the present time who in the picture of Jesus see, as it appears to us, only the reverse side; others only His austerity, severity, renunciation of the world; of one whose attention was fixed on the future. But neither can deny the other side, save at the expense of historical accuracy. And if they do as a matter of fact recognise these same things, but only as something



inexplicable and incidental, and in particular the indications of openness to the world as the revelation of a healthy nature, as fragments from a rich table, then they make His personality, without intending it, a psychological riddle. These are not irresolvable contradictions. Their unity does not lie in the surface but deep down, in the certainty of this single truth, that He is the Son of this Father and that it is His will to be so at every moment.

A closer statement of what this example of Jesus means is of importance, for the sake of clearness of thought and on account of its practical consequences. This example cannot consist in the individual features of His life as individual, nor in His life as a whole, if it is only considered in its outer aspect. It consists rather in the essential nature of His whole disposition of mind as it is illustratively exhibited in the whole picture. For this picture—provided it is to belong to this actual world—bears the sharply defined features which mark His special vocation, such as is found in no other, and which He carried out under wholly special circumstances. If we were to make Him an example in this sense, then we should deny the possibility of His being an example. If He can be this for all changing periods, and if He is to be this without the denial of His unique dignity as our Redeemer, it can only be by that in Him which is most subjective and unique, which expresses itself in His mien and detachment, such as can never be repeated. It is a particularly glorious side of faith in Christ that its object has, by His ascension, disrobed His earthly image of all temporal limitations, and by this means became transformed into an example for all men, various as they are, and for all periods, different as they may be. There is another reason why this must be so: the other notion of what His example is does not harmonise with the Evangelical method of understanding Christian ethics. It would destroy the unity and independence which is inseparable from the nature of real moral action. Jesus would be the promulgator of a law which would have a statutory stamp, and be permanently external to the will.

Hence in the Evangelical Church the phrase ‘imitation of Christ,’ in its external connotation, can have no right place.

All copying of His life is at once excluded. 'Imitation of Christ' can be taught in very various ways. The Catholic mode is perhaps most plainly seen in the method of St Francis, concerning whom a *Book of Conformity to Christ* is designed to show how everything in the life of Christ had its parallel in His great disciple, even to the marks of the cross and ascension; or in the fanatical idea that it is possible to follow Jesus in His redemptive work; or in the rationalistic attempt to make the virtue of Jesus an example in every respect. And these three forms pass over into one another in various ways. But even that form which is connected with those named by its similarity, which says that the single sayings of Jesus Christ in their isolation should be regarded as rules to be followed, is doubtful. Jesus Himself, according to St John (xviii. 22), did not literally fulfil His own rule of offering the other cheek to the smiter (St Matt. v. 39), in order that He might fulfil it in a deeper sense. He has even on this point shown the way to freedom. After all, the high estimate of Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* is beside the mark. It is only Evangelical when and so far as it can help in the carrying out in the life of the apostolic reminder to "do all in the name of Jesus" (Col. iii. 17). To "do all in the name of Jesus," in the sense of the law which has become personal in Him, is to imitate Christ. To do all 'in Christ,' eating and drinking, waking and sleeping, praying, troubling, glorying; in anxiety, in life and in death,—to do this 'in Christ' was not for St Paul a suitable formula of speech, but a reality. And now, since no doubt remains as to the principle, we may add also that, if in spite of this the expression 'imitation of Christ' has been degraded and become suspicious, it is only a sign which betrays the fact that there is a proneness to weaken down the whole sternness of the Christian command, in (if needs be) its inmost world-renouncing severity. As opposed to this inclination, even a drastic reminder of walking 'in His footsteps,' and the pathetic question, 'What would Jesus do,' in my place? may be justifiable. Only in this there exists the danger of carrying out artificially made plans of life in a fantastical way, and of despising daily tasks in simple circum-

stances. The phrases 'in the name of Jesus' and 'in Christ' have more depth than breadth of applicability.

THE DEEPEST SPRING OF ACTION; OR LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST  
AS INCENTIVE AND MOTIVE POWER ('FAITH AND WORKS').

The clearer our conscious grasp of the grandeur of the chief End and the supreme Rule, as each is understood in Christian ethics, the more urgent becomes the question as to the Motive of action which seeks for that End in that way. Ever and anon, in every single statement in which we tried to make the 'Good' and the 'Law' clear to ourselves, we might have interpolated the demand, 'How do we come by such action?' Such a question would nowhere be a mere factitious interruption; on the contrary, is one difficult to keep back. The exponents of other than the Christian ethical view do not infrequently allude to this difficulty; the measure in which they feel and recognise this is indeed a proof of thoughtfulness and impartiality. Of course, as long as End and Norm are dominated by the idea of utility there is no need for a doctrine of Motives. But is the question then an ethical one? So soon, however, as the ethical is recognised in its true character, it is indeed easy to say what is the high motive for doing the 'Good.' Purely for the sake of the 'Good'; but it is hard to say whence the motive power is derived for such action. In Christian ethics especially is this difficulty accentuated. It does not extenuate the contradiction in which we are found to the divinely 'Good'; it knows that there is a kingdom of sin in which we are all guiltily involved (p. 148). And it has an ideal so unsurpassable that we cannot speak of motive at all in relation to it, save such as is of the purest and deepest. In the kingdom of love there can be absolutely nothing done in the love of God and our neighbour save from love. And by this the question as to the motive power to truly 'good' action is unavoidable and, as it seems, impossible to ignore. It is just in the answer to this question that the Christian Church has from the beginning seen its superiority. Many a time those noble spirits who sought refuge in the Church from the Græco-Roman world thought almost less of finding a new End and a

new Law of their action, than of the certainty of its truth, and the motive power for its realisation. In the experience of the love of God lies the impulse and motive power to 'good' action, to love. This is the Christian 'Thou shalt' and the Christian ethical 'Thou canst.' (If we here speak in this way of 'Thou shalt,' whereas it was, we said, to be treated under another point of view, that of the supreme command, yet this stands in no need of justification after what has been previously said on the ethical principle (*cf.* pp. 12, 56, 95)). This simply sublime thought it is proper to explain more at large. The expression just used for it harmonises with Evangelical ethics. But in the formal Confessions of our Church this question which is to engage our attention is usually treated under the heading of Faith and Works.

### *Faith and Works.*

This title has reference to Catholic teaching. And the Catholic Christian traces the motive power to good works back to the grace of God in Christ. It is a conviction common to Christians that moral endeavour does not reach its aim unaided; and that it is not sufficient to assert that the idea of God is one inseparably connected with the idea of the Good in order to necessitate, for the sake of this context of ideas, the existence of God (Postulate, p. 103). Christian morality for all forms of faith rests on reality, *i.e.* on the revelation of the holy and gracious God. But for the Romish Church (p. 114) this grace is not properly that personal loving will which, effectual through Christ, creates anew our wills, but a mysterious force operative through the sacraments. So far as any *personal* transaction is in question at all, free will works together with sacramental grace, and performs good works which merit salvation. In this view good works and this eternal life, the vision of God, stand to one another in an external relation; they are the divinely ordered method of acquiring this reward; but the End is of another kind than the way which leads to it; or their inner unity and conformity are at any rate not unreservedly carried through. The incentives, therefore, to good works are hence necessarily eudæmonistic; something



else is aimed at than the Good merely; and in the same way this motive power to the Good, since it is a compound of the grace given and free will, is not in itself a unity and a satisfactory whole;—a judgment by which, of course, the pious Catholic is not touched who with a pure heart seeks God even with incomplete idea and unsufficing powers. Or, more closely, the Romish doctrine does not know the highest and purest spring of action in our sense even where it praises in enthusiastic words love to God, and supposes that it surpasses ours in earnestness and warmth. It is not less clear that its works are isolated performances, by which way of speaking once more we do not pass judgment on the personal morality of members of this Church. In short, the Reformation objection is intelligible. The Roman Catholics neither show what good works are, nor how they are done, and no reproach against Evangelicals is less founded than that which affirms they depreciate good works. On the contrary, they speak with open plainness of true Christian perfection, on which there was in the School theology profound silence, while much that was useless was discussed. They make it intelligible how grace is the spring and motive power of doing good with pure intention. The latter point is the problem with which we must at once busy ourselves; the former is also in this place an important application of what has been said above of the highest commandment. And in fact it is easy to put the inexperienced right—both as to the more precise affirmations of the Reformers and those of Holy Scripture—who have been captured by opponents, or by the term ‘good works,’ on which the latter have put a false stamp. A favourite passage of Luther’s was that saying of our Lord on the “good tree which bringeth forth good fruit” (St Mark vii. 17). In the New Testament the number of our good works is spoken of, but only where no misconception is possible. Alongside works there significantly appears the ‘walk,’ the doing of ‘the Good’ (St James i. 4; Phil. i. 22; 1 Thess. i. 3; St John xvii. 4; 1 Pet. i. 17; Rom. ii. 7). And we may not forget that the question here treated concerns all those fundamental relations of the ‘Good’ repeatedly discussed, on which we fixed attention

in speaking of the content of the highest Good and the supreme commandment. A closer examination of those propositions is needful in which our confessional writings say how, *i.e.* for what reasons, good works are wrought, or how for the sake of clearness the incentive and the motive power to good action are distinguished. It is not invariably the case that these two points, incentive and motive power, or, Why should we? and Why can we do the Good? are intentionally separated, since they are, as a matter of fact, closely connected; and it is easy to see that the first of these took the second place because a strong feeling of the moral motive power which belonged to the newly discovered faith was a part of their life. But the Reformer's distinction is helpful to lucidity, and even in the New Testament the two are distinguished as in the deepest ground one. We ought to love because "the love of God has appeared" and "He who is born of God" loves; "the love of Christ constraineth us"; "to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much"; and he who will not miss his reward is to forgive "unto seventy times seven." That imperative 'Thou shalt' is accentuated and deepened; that 'Thou canst' is now true, and both have become one by faith in God's forgiving love.

Why ought we to do 'good works,' to love God and our neighbour? Plenty of answers are ready. "On account of God's command"<sup>1</sup> (Conf. Augsb. vi. 20.) "For the honour of God and to His praise and glory" (Apol. vi. 77); as a confession of our faith (Apol. iii. 68); for the exercise of our faith; to prove the reality of our faith and as witness to it (Apol. iii. 63). The Holy Spirit too is spoken of as bestowing the impulse to good works. And why *can* we do 'good works'? whence do we gain the power for a new moral life? Here the answers are less various. They run: Through the Holy Spirit who is given to believers; and from faith; on account of faith; they are the fruits of faith (*cf.* the places cited above); and especially from thankful faith. At the bottom the twofold answer is the same—the Holy Ghost and faith are the incentive and motive power of the new life. For what was additionally included in the first question can be traced back to faith. Faith has

<sup>1</sup> "Bona opera mandata a Deo facere."

respect to God's commandment, and is a belief in God's faithfulness; and God's commandment and God's honour are at bottom one. This depth of meaning has its sources in the Christian idea of what God is.

But the Holy Ghost and faith are inseparably connected. What that means when it is said the Holy Ghost is the incentive and power to the new life, we apprehend, if we understand what that means, when we say it is the incentive and motive power *of* the new life. In brief, and without intruding too much into doctrine, this is so on the following grounds. To have the Spirit of a father or of a friend is just the same as 'having the mind' of the friend or the father. But along with this very many also say that the father or the friend is somehow the originator of such disposition of mind. In any case, to have God's Spirit means to be 'spiritually minded'; to aim at God's End; to be ruled by the law of His will; governed by the same motives as God; to love as He loves. For when we say, 'God is love,' we necessarily mean, in our human speech, to say that 'God is Spirit'; we presuppose the form of a spiritual personality when we speak of love; and by the term 'Holy Spirit' we mean in the New Covenant not merely in general that the divine nature is alone, unapproachable, incomparable, but that He is also this inasmuch as in His innermost spiritual nature He is love. And we mean also something else when we speak of God's Spirit; we mean that He produces in us a likeness of mind to Himself; and it is in this that the greatest emphasis lies when we speak of our fellowship with God. Now, God gives us His Holy Spirit, and therefore that mind which constitutes His nature. And this not in some way inconceivable. Truly the dwelling of God in us and His gift of His Spirit is the eternal secret of God, and for us the eternal reason for our worship. This indwelling gift is not bestowed accidentally, vaguely, without rule, as if it had no definite content. Enthusiasts fancy that God can at any moment do any imaginable thing in a human soul, and make His Spirit operative in it. Our Evangelical Church rejoices in His work wrought in us 'in Christ,' who is Himself full of the Spirit, but acknowledges this

work is bound up with the word of the Gospel. For us the Spirit and the Word are mutually conjoined. It is by faith in the Gospel, by trust, that it becomes to us a personal possession. Hence it is by the faith, by the trust, which we personally experience that we understand the working of the Spirit in us ; and what that miracle of God's Spirit working in the human spirit means as a matter of our experience. It is on the ground of such experience that we are able to understand it. We do not mean that it is all one whether we use the term Spirit or faith. We must speak of the Holy Spirit if we are to express in unambiguous language the fact that what we experience is from God ; that faith is not mere fancy or a dream, but a real work of God in us. But we may simplify our question as to the incentive and motive power to the new life by asking : How far does each rest in faith ?

*The Incentive to Good Works.*

First of all as to the *incentive*. Different paths lead to the same goal. We might start from God's forgiving grace, that will to love on which faith lays hold, or from the nature of faith. God forgives sins. But this does not mean that He remits all external punishment of sins, and leaves the state of the man just what it was. It means He removes the sense of guilt, the feeling of alienation ; that He brings the sinner into fellowship with Himself, makes him blessed in the possession of justification, and receives him as a child of God into closest fellowship with Himself. This fellowship is, moreover, fellowship with the perfect Father, the one good God. The nature of this fellowship and the blessedness of it constrain our love. It is impossible to obtain its possession and not desire to retain it, and not desire too to be blessed with that blessedness which is a part of the nature of God, of which we have become sharers freely and gratuitously. It is the same thing viewed from another side, *i.e.* from the point of view of faith, to say that it is impossible to believe in God's prevenient love and not at the same time to have sympathy with God's designs. Where this is not the case such persons do not know what personal faith is. I cannot appropriate to myself the love of a friend without



willing what he wills, and I can only have fellowship with him in love by having that love which makes up his being. Speaking strictly, we cannot quite say that the incentive to the love of God and our neighbour is the result of our faith in God's love to us. It is rather the result of the great gift received by faith. This is the immediate incentive to the new life in which our love to God and our neighbour becomes manifest. And why the love of God and of our neighbour are indissolubly connected needs not to be repeated (p. 168). The new spiritual life of the Christian does not turn away from God when it turns to our neighbour, but by this love of our neighbour it turns to God and rests in God. All that we receive from the divine fulness in faith is that which immediately impels us to the love of God as to the love of our neighbour, and this is so because God is the Love which realises itself in His kingdom.

It is now clear of itself how far the answers of our Confession of Faith spoken of above, although not so in their verbal expression, are yet at bottom one. They do, however, only express one aspect of the truth. For instance, when it is said we do good works 'on account of the divine commandment,' even the most advanced Christian has in this the wholesome reminder that the new life does not follow the course of nature, but is, and continues to be, a moral life; that it is perfected in submission to the will of God, and in the struggle to do it. But the other idea of 'grateful love' is far clearer. It is quite right in its assertion that moral action has an incentive in grateful affection. But of course we must not think merely of 'giving thanks,' however important this is; nor of 'proving our gratitude,' as if we could give some recompense to God, however indispensable devotion of the whole life in gratitude to God is; nor of 'being thankful' in the sense of exuberant emotional feeling, however unnecessary it may seem to protest warmly against the superabounding emotionalism of enthusiastic spiritual hymns. The incontestable and unimpeachable correctness of the idea of grateful love is clear from the above; otherwise those precious stones (such as Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 14) must be removed from the fabric of the New Testament.

Quite naturally the consideration of this question, Why ought

good works to be done? passes over into the next: How *can* they be done? How far do we comprehend faith as the motive power of the new moral life? Because, once more, fellowship with God, and the blessedness found in it, are bestowed in faith by the forgiveness of our sins. We said above it constrains to good action, because its nature is such that it cannot be obtained or retained in any other way than by our will to love because God is love. Now we say it is the motive power to good action, and we are able to love because of the fellowship and blessedness we have as God's gift. It may be that the explanatory definitions of the reason of this, in our Confessions of Faith, are not sufficiently perspicuous; also that faith is represented in some of the statements as too much a matter of natural power, from which the fruit of good works necessarily proceeds. But by experience the plain and inexhaustible truth of that witness is abundantly evident; I mean, the truth that we are not able to do the 'Good' so long as we do not possess an experience that it is the highest Good. Man can do much; but he has no power to love God and his neighbour as long as God and his neighbour appear alienated from him, and at enmity with him, because he thinks that they, by disturbing his own aims, disturb his happiness. It is impossible to eradicate the passion, the human hunger for happiness, as long as man is what he is. So long as he seeks that happiness in himself, and in the world, he cannot love God, and will ever remain unblest. Every advantage gained proves illusive, carries him farther from his goal, because he pursues a wrong way. And the deepest misery is the feeling of guilt with which his alienation from God burdens him, because he, by his own act and deed, runs counter to that which is his true destiny. But now God forgives the debt, adopts him as His child, bestows upon him the blessedness of His fellowship. Thus the hindrance is removed to doing the Good; the way is open. He is now in the right way because by that unspeakable gift he is also at the goal; at that goal which is ever to be gained afresh in the eternal gift—a gift which, on account of its nature, becomes a task to perform eternal as God Himself. But all this is realisable in faith: Faith itself; trust in God's revealed grace, the readiness

to receive it is the great new motive force, and the only one which enables us to do the Good. Man can only love God and his neighbour because he is beloved by God; can only give because it is superabundantly given to him. There is no longer hunger for happiness, which was a hindrance to true love because this love and our own happiness appeared irreconcilable. There is no longer fear of evil which continually threatened the desired happiness, and so was a hindrance to all love. Every event, pleasure, and burden of this life is the leading of the Father, a demand on the child, who has grown rich in the love of the Father, to exercise love to others, in that state of life in which the Father, whose world this is, desires that love to be exhibited. So could Luther rightly say that "He begets us anew, and transforms us; slays the old man; makes us quite different men in heart, courage, sense and capacities. Oh, Faith is a living, energetic, mighty thing! It does not ask whether there are good works to be done, but has already done them and is always doing them." <sup>1</sup>

These words of Luther have found a place in the last of our Lutheran formularies, as no one understood the connection of faith and works so profoundly as he did. They may here at the same time stand for an answer to the question, which likewise need be no longer ambiguously answered, which follows on what has been said, and that is, whether this connection of faith and works is in the strictest sense indissoluble. In the older formularies that was regarded as self-evident. Hence, although the usage varies as to individual terms, in the main such words as regeneration, justification, renewal, restoration, and similar expressions were regarded as synonyms. In that latest formulary, however, renewal is definitely spoken of as following regeneration, although with the proviso that the question is not one of order of time, but of order of thought. And by this is not meant that which we call sanctification, the progress of the new life, but the life itself. The reason for such modification of doctrine is clear and indisputable, and that is, the consolation of justification by grace without works must be safeguarded. But this end may be attained in another

<sup>1</sup> Preface to Epistle to Romans in Luther's Commentary.—TR.

way. The above statements no one will be able to misconceive as imperilling the principle 'by faith alone.' But that He who 'freely gives us all things' is, in and with our faith, the direct incentive and motive power to the new life is both set forth in the New Testament as something self-evident and is the experience of all believers. Utterances like those of our Württemberg Book for Confirmees on the first and second use of faith are therefore to be correctly explained in the sense of the Reformers. If that had always been done, if the intimate connection of faith and works, of justification and adoption on the one hand, of childlike prayer and a holy life on the other, had been inscribed in the heart, in the way Luther explained, then no such confused and bewildering preaching as that, for example, of Pearsall Smith (1875), with all his personal zeal, would ever have taken so strong a hold on Germany. What was good in it was not new but old, frequently adulterated Lutheran and New Testament truth, and the rest fanaticism. (*Cf. Doctrine of Assurance.*)

These statements on faith and works are the common property of the Protestant Churches. The difference between Luther and the Swiss Reformer does not concern the principle that faith is the motive power and incentive to the new life, or the reason why this is so, but only the closer definition of the sphere in which this moral action shall operate; and correspondingly as to the degree of warmth in which it is to manifest itself externally—so far, it is true, a somewhat different direction of thought, and then, of course, of kind of faith as well. Zwinglius was a statesman and a warrior with the same saving faith as that which made Luther endure, wait, often restrain and curb statesmen. Luther saw the danger as quickly as others, and realised the difficulty not less acutely than they. But the faith which he expresses in his hymn, "A strong tower is our God, a trusty shield and weapon," is the great truth for him, in the sense that his faith here *reposes* rather than is *externally active*. Still, who would say that this resting on God was not in his case the highest action, activity, work, a reposing on God's eternal power? And who is bold enough to say that the battles of the Churches founded by Geneva were not battles



for faith which saved Protestantism? The Evangelical notion of faith is so profound that it not merely allows but demands such apparently widely opposed manifestations of its activity.

So far this would be an incomplete statement unless attention were explicitly drawn to the fact that the faith which is the incentive and motive power to the new moral life cannot be disconnected from repentance. Some word, then, must be said on faith and repentance. It is of no importance to the main question that the use of these terms is confused. Of course, the idea of recompense by painful penance is excluded. It is 'change of mind' that is meant, so far as this word implicates not merely turning to God but aversion to sin, and this aversion it is which is emphasised. The Augsburg Confession in Art. 12 calls it 'sorrow for sin' and a 'troubled conscience,' and when this is conjoined with faith it names it penitence and considers it synonymous with 'conversion.' In our context it is enough to insist that the faith of which such great things have been said is altogether and in all respects the faith that is penitential, sorrowful, and grieved at the thought of sin; but that sorrow alone, apart from faith, can never be the motive power of the new life. And this is the answer also to that moot point much discussed in late years, whether repentance arises from the law or the Gospel. Our Reformers maintained both. Now, since Luther had experienced the terrors of a troubled conscience wrought in him by the law, and on quite another side had such experiences as those of his Saxon pastoral visitation,<sup>1</sup> it was impossible to undervalue the law as an educative power. But that the true sorrow for sin is not to be severed from belief in the Gospel these theologians firmly held. This, in fact, was the new element in their knowledge. In general only this much may be affirmed: first, that a

<sup>1</sup> One of the early effects of the Reformation in Saxony was that great confusion arose through the break-down of the old conditions, increased by the incompetence of many of the clergy to deal with the circumstances that arose. Luther made a visitation in 1527 in connection with Melancthon. Arrangements were made to secure proper teaching, church discipline, and an order of worship. One fruit of this visitation was the compilation of Luther's Large and Shorter Catechisms.—Tr.

troubled conscience and the terrors of the law have an undeniable, though of course in details very varied, value for those not yet conscious of salvation, while repentance is a grace of the Gospel, and it is really only converting repentance when united with faith. Thus, in the life of the true Christian repentance is fundamentally a Gospel grace. This will be further elucidated in individual ethics when treating of what is called the third use of the law.

Taking a thesis from doctrinal teaching, it is here proper to make reference to the relation between GRACE and FREEDOM, God's work and man's. From the principles of our religion, from its teaching concerning God, man, and sin, we arrived in various passages at the result that God's working is regarded as creative. Our formularies therefore rightly say that the natural man cannot dispose himself to divine grace, prepare himself to seek it, to turn to it or work together with it, as if it were a co-ordinate factor. The same statement is applicable also to the new man, the renewed man, in the sense that a co-operation of God and man as if they were two homogeneous forces of the created world has no place even after conversion.

Even in human relations of mutual trust such ideas are unsatisfying. In education, in friendship, two natures do not work homogeneously. It is the higher nature that calls into activity the trust of the lower. It would be absurd and, more, destructive of the whole relationship of love if a child should consider his will as a will co-operating with his father's. The relationship is one of the subjection of one will to the other. Nor is this conclusion disturbed if the child has made that will his own. How much more must the will of the Father of all be regarded as creative! Only it is needful once more to insist that man's trust in God's grace is voluntary, and is his free act as a responsible being. Man is not a mere passive instrument, he is not like a stick or a stone—nay, he is worse than this, since he can resist. These are generally not only unsatisfactory illustrations—because they are taken from the natural kingdom, while this is a question which concerns the spirit—but they explicitly deny, in a way our fathers would not deny, responsibility. For it is not possible, while ascribing resistance to

divine grace to man, to ascribe grace to God alone. And for the question under consideration it affords no help to say that the power to believe is given, not natural to us, however true that is in the other meaning of the above example. Consequently what has been said earlier as to the indispensableness and the correctness of the idea of moral freedom as real freedom to decide for or against the Good, finds here its most important and indisputable practical application.

Having treated the deepest motive of Christian moral action, we may now finish a former discussion, and finally dispose of the charge of hedonism (eudæmonism) brought against Christian ethics.

### *The Charge of Hedonism.*

This charge, usually brought against every system of ethics which has a religious foundation, is levelled against the Christian system with constantly increasing energy, since here it meets a great antagonist. With remarkable frequency there is, at the same time, the opposite charge, that Christian ethics unnaturally suppresses every natural desire for happiness. Both are with some difficulty combined in the idea that renunciation of this world is balanced by happiness in the next, since for the purpose of such a statement the Christian hereafter has all too little sensuous colouring. To such a peculiar method of attack no disproof is immediately obvious, and no doubt there are at least individual passages of the New Testament, particularly the use of the word *reward*, which do repeatedly awaken in the cursory reader the feeling that the charge of hedonism is intrinsically justified. A verdict becomes easier, in the opinion of many, because both sides provisionally understand one another; since even in a system of ethics which is exclusively and fundamentally hedonistic appeal can be made, for educative reasons, to invitatory motives, which represent the Good as the Useful, the True as the Prudent. They attract attention, they give the enslaved will courage for effort. Truly: only the effort will show soon enough that these motives are not long-enduring; that only the good will leads to the End whose incentive and motive power we have become acquainted with. To say that those treasures are worth striving for which

the thief cannot break through and steal is just as illuminative as it is insufficient to conquer the natural inclination for earthly good. The idea of a public reward of closet prayer and alms given in secret has never produced men of much prayer and self-sacrificing zeal, even when the profounder meaning of such sayings has been apprehended. It is consequently a constant dispute about words whether such an educative reference is to be found in the words of the Lord.

If we look at the assertions which are without doubt fundamental, the worth of the objections may perhaps be examined in the following order. There is no question that the care of the Father in heaven is promised to all the members of His kingdom. "All other things shall be added to them"; they are of more value than the birds and the lilies. But riches, honour, pleasure are nowhere promised to them. That promise confines itself to what is absolutely needful, if a man aims at the highest End as it is desired he should. The great care, supreme care, at every stage of the earthly career he only can exercise from whom anxiety for earthly good, as the greatest, has been taken away, so long as he in his earthly conflict stands for the Good. Very well, say our opponents; but that really means speculating in sensuous enjoyment, and seeking for it, if future happiness is promised as 'the new heavens and the new earth,' 'drinking the fruit of the vine new,' 'sitting down' with the Patriarchs, 'thrones and crowns.' Now, the barest justice demands us to note that such sayings (which are infrequent) must be taken in connection with those sayings which are more numerous and less metaphorical, and that it is then easy to comprehend them, but not conversely. He 'who hungers after righteousness' is filled—with righteousness. Righteousness dwells in the new heavens and the new earth. The 'pure in heart' shall see God—God who is Spirit, Light, Love. His fellowship, moreover, is an eternal fellowship with the members of His kingdom. And further, if God is to be 'all in all,' and the Good realisable under the conditions of our outward life, how would it be otherwise expressed than by such a saying as that of the 'new world' and the 'new body'? From all the ideas which the Christian can conceive



on the subject, from all presentiments that when that which is Good is perfected then all that is true and all that is beautiful will be perfected, we thankfully turn back to those plain words on righteousness, so inexhaustibly profound. Again, our opponents object, it is still a suspicious thing that it is said that this future glory is guaranteed to faith, for in this way the purity of the motive in seeking for the Good is clouded. As if the guarantee 'in faith' did not exclude all intellectual certainty, all compulsory conviction. The exponents of this objection ought at least so far thoughtfully to consider the fact of faith as to perceive that there is in it, for the natural sense, little that is persuasive and enticing. The gladness of hope (Rom. v. 1) is wholly and entirely grounded on the 'peace and joy' of the new life, which our opponents in this context value lightly, and regard as quite insecure. If notwithstanding they find in it a stumbling-block, then their charge that Christian ethics is hedonistic amounts in the end to the idea that it is ethical, although it is not faith in the victory of the Good. This idea has already been refuted in the first part.

Still, it is possible that the word 'reward' may be felt to be a difficulty. But this idea of reward is only hedonistic if it is united with the idea of merit. If it were possible by good action, and especially by specific works which transcend mere duty, to merit happiness, and such happiness as, according to the nature of the subject, must be happiness of a different kind from life in the 'Good,' in love, then the purity of the moral incentive would be disturbed. The contrary, as has now been often observed, is the case, and is most explicitly asserted in St Luke xvii. 7 ff., St Matt. xx. 1 ff. The self-confession of the great champion in 1 Cor. ix. 15 ff. shows this at once. His 'reward' he gains by voluntary sacrifice of his whole person, exhibited in renouncing all claim to the support of the churches, and he but wishes to become a sharer in the Gospel which he preaches. This is his 'reward.' And so there lies in the natural employment of the term 'reward'—a use certainly borrowed from the ethics in which 'right' is a leading notion and transferred to the kingdom of love—for the most part,

merely a plain and important allusion to the meaning which the moral endeavour for salvation in the Kingdom of God has on account of its nature, of which we have frequently spoken and shall speak again. Consequently, the question is, as regards this endeavour in the Kingdom of God, really one that concerns personal freedom, and so it is that reward is spoken of; exactly as also of a righteousness of God which has respect to man's behaviour to his fellows (Heb. vi. 10). Both these words, reward and righteousness, emphasise the truth more strongly than any other that the reaping corresponds to the sowing (2 Cor. ix. 6). If the reconciliation of divine grace and human freedom is not perceivable by Christian knowledge at its earthly stage, there is no clear contrariety between grace and reward. Hence it is not advisable to use the term 'reward of grace' carelessly in religious address, because it easily produces the impression that there is no serious regard paid to moral endeavour; or because, conversely, it serves merely for a covering of the self-pleasing idea of merit. The term has an indisputably correct meaning founded on St Matt. i. 20. According to this, the final reason for speaking at all of a reward is only the goodness of the 'goodman of the house.' Then haughtiness and envy, the hypocritical glance at our own doing as our own, and harsh judgment on others are excluded.

Of course he who raises the complaint of hedonism against any system for which the accomplishment of the Good generally is not merely self-denial, nor the exaltation and enrichment of the life in this way, but life which is truly such and in harmony with our destiny, will not be won over by confuting argument. But he has not a higher but only an incomplete knowledge of ethics. In the salvation which consists in divine adoption eudæmonism of the unethical type is overcome because this transcends mere moral rigorism. Stress was laid on this at the outset (p. 10), and now after this fundamental explanation of the nature of the Christian Good no more is to be said. In addition, we have become acquainted (p. 181) with that great gift of the Love of God as the sole sufficient motive power of our love, and how this highest Good is received, kept, and

perfected in moral action will be shown under various headings in the following exposition.

And thus, finally, this consideration that the love of God experienced in Christ is the deepest motive to Christian morality, the incentive and motive power to love, precisely because it is felt to be the highest Good, brings to its proper conclusion all that has been said of the relation of religion to ethics, and afterwards applied and more closely determined. They are really inseparable. Not only does Christian ethics rest wholly on Christian faith, but also Christian faith itself is throughout ethical in its character, which only belongs to the man who recognises the moral requirement, bows himself before the Good, yearns after the Good. Of course full knowledge of the Good springs out of a really deep desire of the Good itself, and from the drawing near to us of Him who alone is the good God. But this drawing near is only for him who is resolved to understand and to recognise that it is the drawing near of the good God. And what is true of the first movement of faith is true also of each stage of its development.

Herewith we are led to the threshold of our next section. We have been involuntarily compelled to touch on terms like conversion or regeneration, but they belong as fundamental concepts to the teaching on Christian personality. Still, in passing on to its consideration it may, for the sake of logical completeness, be at least mentioned that we might here, at the conclusion, discuss in unison with our prime principle (p. 118) how far Christ is to be regarded as the deepest Motive of Christian moral action, precisely in the same way as we had to conclude our teaching on the highest Rule with Him (p. 174).

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NEW LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN, OR CHRISTIAN PERSONALITY.

#### INDIVIDUAL ETHICS.

THE reason for this division and for the distinction drawn between individual and social ethics has been given above (p. 124). It follows from the nature of the Christian Good, which we have realised to ourselves in the first section of our dissertation, that we must now represent in two sections, independent yet frequently crossing over into one another, how the life of the individual and how the life of the community shape themselves under Christian influences.

The main thought of this whole section, that we are not born Christians, but that we become Christians (as St Augustine says), and that the change involved is a fundamental one, is, after all that has been said, beyond contention (St Mark i. 15; Rom. xii. 2). If we are all bound up in the kingdom of sin (p. 148 ff.), then we all need transformation; and if this affects our deepest nature, then we all need a thorough-going change. When this deepest of all springs of action becomes operative, and the Christian strives for the Christian End in harmony with the supreme Rule, other and lower motives of action are subdued. This truth is independent of the varied ways in which the truth is, as to details, expressed. The most frequent designations of this phenomenon are 'conversion' and 'regeneration.' These terms are of course by some variously understood and different values assigned to them. For instance, in our formulary it is necessary to closely consider whether they in



their former context mean a total change in every respect, or in the narrower sense the planting of faith in us; also whether these expressions mark the event more as the work of God, or more as something that we can really experience of ourselves. But since we convinced ourselves that, when faith is given, all is in reality given, the first distinction is not of so much importance. But as far as regards the second the word 'regeneration' more plainly emphasises (in harmony with its derivation) that the new life is God's work; while 'conversion,' or turning again, is something realised by man's own personal action. Hence the first expression is doctrinal, the latter ethical. Both mean essentially the same thing, *i.e.* they refer to this great change in all its aspects, but under different points of view. This must be emphasised, or otherwise it would be easy, in what follows, to overlook the express reference to the divine work; but to maintain this, with the complete absence of ambiguity with which it needs to be maintained, in harmony with the experience of all truly converted persons, whether eminent or obscure, is not an affair of ethics but of dogmatics.

But that unimpeachable great truth of conversion contains a difficult problem, and one clearly enough of fresh importance for the present time. The statement set forth above is a judgment on the subjective nature of conversion. The problem it contains may be put thus: What is the relation between this subjective nature and its realisation at a given time? Is this experience, which is in its nature new, an experience of something new at a given time, limited to this time? In short, is there such a thing as the point of transition from the old to the new life? Now, as a matter of fact, for Evangelical Christians, that saying of Luther, which is true to Scripture and experience, is beyond debate—a Christian man is ever growing, not a finished product. There is no such thing as a sudden conversion, as if by magical transformation. It is precisely the work of Christian ethics to portray this growth; it is a carrying out, rightly understood, of the first Reformation thesis, that a Christian's life is a daily repentance; for we do not give the term repentance its Evangelical meaning if we are

not permitted to call it conversion. Repentance is a change of mind (a *μετάνοια*: Mark i. 15). But in that statement of Luther's it is the conversion of the Christian that is spoken of. Is there no such thing as conversion to Christianity? and that in the midst of Christian influences? Is it a mere methodistical exaggeration if we take conversion at a definite time as a complete turning to the Christian Good, and even assume that there is a fixed point of transition from the old to the new life? In that case are we not supposing that the other term for conversion, regeneration, is something scarcely intelligible? Or should the latter be regarded as merely a metaphor for something thought of as done completely and at once, which is only actually done in a gradual development? and the metaphor is (say) used merely when the fact is to be looked at from its divine side, because indeed God's doings can only be thought of as complete, and independent of time. What this problem means becomes especially plain by the subordinate question, whether that sudden change, if we are to assume that it is such, is, at any rate in its main features, an occurrence similar in all cases; and whether any consciousness of it is present in the subject of it. This latter subordinate question clearly illustrates what the main question implicates; the former, under what conditions it has any intelligible meaning at all. However it is decided, it is important enough to deserve special mention. For in this way it is most convincingly clear what, on general or Evangelical principles, is to be understood by conversion. Hence we purposely speak first of the commencement of the new life of the Christian personality; and then of the progress of the new life, of its growth and increase; of the development of the Christian personality. That is, we examine whether this distinction is justifiable. Here also terms are of little importance—for instance, whether the development is to be called sanctification, and the commencement renewal, or whether possibly the term conversion should be reserved for this; although we may be certain that the propriety of this latter limitation is of itself a matter of serious doubt, because it almost necessarily leads into a methodistical rut.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW LIFE.

In the New Testament the first impression that we have plainly is that, not only is the distinction between the old and the new life strongly emphasised, but that it recognises a decisive turning-point, a crisis which (in keeping with the then historical conditions) coincides in the main with the transition out of the old religion, whether it was Judaism or heathenism, into the Christian Church. And fresh intelligence from the mission-field serves as a constant reminder of such New Testament accounts of the origins. For instance, there is a story of the Buddhist youths who, in many respects already become Christians, would not break with a particular sin, and for that reason declined baptism, and then on account of this obstacle at once gave up their disinclination. It is instructive, with the help of a concordance of the Bible, to learn how numerous are the fine distinctions of terms in various parts of the New Testament writings, in the words of the Lord, of St Paul, in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Apocalypse; and still that first impression is the general one. Throughout these passages the question is of an important recommencement, a sheer division, a revolution of the innermost nature, a change of mind. Closer consideration modifies but does not destroy this first impression. It modifies it, for change of mind, conversion, is required of those who are already within the Church, and have been perhaps for long time past, and so far as human judgment goes are distinguished members of it. We may think of the Epistles to the Churches of the Apocalypse. This observation in its double aspect is corroborated by the fact that other expressions besides change of mind and conversion (neither of which is relatively employed so much as is sometimes assumed) are used in a quite similar way both of a decisive turning-point and of a repeated 'turning again' to the truly 'Good.' The concordance will supply the proofs, in the use of such words as 'sanctify,' 'renew,' 'enlighten,' 'rising again,' 'putting on Christ.' In short, the great question of which we are seeking an answer is, by the New Testament itself, set in a clear light, and, reserving all special exceptions, we

may at once say, set forth in such a way that to ignore the idea of a sudden change and fresh start in the strict sense, and such as actually completes itself at a given time, is maiming New Testament teaching, just as much as is the assertion that it is concerned with this simply and entirely.

We must similarly conclude in relation to that special side of our question which asks whether this new beginning is, in the main, alike in its character in all instances. Now, on this point the contrary proposition is maintained, because it is said that the New Testament emphasises the utmost conceivable variety of process, especially in its individual biographical notices. What differences between the 'conversion' of a St Paul, of St Peter, of St John! This is also shown by the different expressions employed—'enlighten,' 'sanctify,' 'awaken'—which do not mean stereotyped stages of a 'plan of salvation,' but describe the same thing in different aspects. Similarly, a stress is laid, which is exceedingly remarkable, on the different circumstances in which the spiritual forces which are operative in conversion are displayed. For instance, we may recollect that in the same book, the Acts of the Apostles, the Samaritans are baptised before they receive the Holy Ghost, while Cornelius receives the Holy Ghost before he has been baptised. And yet, in spite of this, there is at the bottom a spiritual similarity in the main point. "Old things are passed away"; "If any man is in Christ Jesus he is a new creature." And all who are in possession of this new life are represented as having a clear consciousness of it. 'You know,' 'we know' are expressions used again and again. Here too in all degrees and forms of clearness.

But, now, have these expressions any application to us, in our circumstances so variously different from those of the commencement of Christianity? If the new life in the Christian society is formed in those who have already been baptised as children, and have from that time been under the incalculable influences of Christian education,—can this new life be regarded as new in the same degree and sense as in the case of a missionary convert? Can it be even in its main features regarded as similar in character? And must such change



always be considered to be a conscious one? Does not the subject itself rather suggest that we should avoid all questions of this kind, and confine ourselves to the simple illustration of gradual growth?

We do get some light by the recollection of the old Protestant theologians' term, the so-called 'plan of salvation.' Even in the Shorter Catechism of Luther the words 'call,' 'enlighten,' 'sanctify' are not taken to mean distinct and definitely bounded stages in the development of the new life. But this was soon done. The usual order, that presently obtained, was calling, enlightenment, regeneration, faith, justification, mystical union, renewal, sanctification, perfection. Against this various objections are possible: as that they unite points of view really distinct; do not sharply define the separate notions for themselves, nor show clearly their mutual relation. Here we are simply concerned with the question, so far as it is relative to our point, whether the commencement of the new life either can or ought to be separated from its progress. And then we are compelled to note that the greater the attention paid to infant baptism, the more importance was attached to it, and the more it was looked upon as regeneration, the less inclination was there to answer the question by looking at actual life; or if that was done, there easily arose opposition to this teaching on infant baptism. Accordingly, in that doctrine of the plan of salvation, in general, too great a uniformity was insisted on compared with the wealth of life's experiences, and yet too little similarity in the main thing. On the one hand there was a danger of setting up a stereotyped pattern. On the other hand the importance of faith was lessened. It is not made plain enough that faith is 'the one and all' when faith and justification are reckoned as separate facts, or as stations in a journey. And then of necessity there could be no secure assurance of the presence of the new life, a difficulty to which pietism is never wearied of drawing attention, without being able to give a satisfactory solution of it.

It was therefore an advance when Schleiermacher simplified the doctrine of salvation, and only distinguished commencement and

continuation. If he called the latter sanctification, we must of course recollect that this is a limited use of a word which is taken in a wider sense in the Holy Scriptures, and in the formularies of faith in a different sense as the equivalent of renewal, the implantation of the Holy Spirit. But this simplification opened the way for a question, Can we speak of 'conversion' in the case of a Christian born into the Church? This simplification also averted the danger of laying down the same course which all must follow, however different their personalities.

Led by such historical reminiscences, we can now show the applicability of the above-mentioned *Principles* of the New Testament. To this we are moved by observing that the idea of conversion, although it is certainly one of the most frequent conscious or unconscious reasons for the aversion to Christian morality, is yet one that appears to be prevalent in the highest forms of ethics. That the higher personal life is relatively to the natural life something really new, and consequently not something that proceeds in the way of gradual evolution from what is natural, but by a new commencement, transformation, breaks with the past, is witnessed in the most varied languages by the religious mysteries, proverbs of the wise, creations of poets. The newest literary works speak of a resurrection, awakening from the dead, in their titles. These are old terms familiar to the Christian. Nay, when St Paul employed them he could calculate on being understood in the Greek-Roman world, in which the noblest men of genius had anticipatively summed up their wisdom in such terms. Nor since then has the message remained dumb. 'Lose all, find all,' 'Die and thou livest,' 'Venture nothing, win nothing.' And it is always an evidence of the earnestness of moral requirement, and a proof that it summons to new conquest, when the watch-words 'regeneration,' 'conversion' ring out clearly. It is in Christian ethics, however, that this tone is the fullest and clearest. What would Christianity be without this new beginning? We have above reflected on the call to change of mind (or 'repentance,' *μετάνοια*) with which Jesus Christ begins His preaching, and that the letters to the seven churches of the Apocalypse contain the same truth; and how St Paul speaks of the 'new creature,' and St John of the 'birth from above.'

And these are not bold metaphors, but experiences, when it is said, 'I live, no longer I,' and 'Old things are passed away.'

But it is just here that in Christian ethics the question becomes a burning one, whether these are genuine experiences, and such experiences as are with good reason continually new; whether such exalted language has any relation to plain reality; whether they are not condemned as falsities by the undeniable facts that, apart entirely from conversion, good is found, and in spite of it much evil exists. And all the more when the self-same men who uttered these enthusiastic confessions also with no less plainness said with regard to the converted, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 St John i.); "not as if I had already attained." Conversely we read, apart from the new life, of the recognition of a seeking for 'glory, immortality' (Rom. ii.), of the noble and the good which comes from God; and in St John (iii.) of a 'being in the truth' and a 'coming to the light.' It is easy to compose this irreconcilable (as would seem) contradiction by a curtailment of one or the other truth, and in the history of Christian ethics this has been attempted in one direction or another. Methodism sees previously to conversion nothing but darkness, and after conversion nothing but light, and no real sin afterwards.<sup>1</sup> Ordinary rationalism sees in the word conversion or regeneration only an unsuitably conceived expression for the really purely gradual development of the 'Good.' The New Testament and the great witnesses of Christian morality give another solution. Life now exists under a new rule. The change is not a quantitative one, it does not concern the whole compass of the moral life in like proportion and in a like way, but it is qualitative. It is the spiritual turning of the soul towards a new and unsurpassable End according to really new rules, from a new and unique reason, which is at the same time its only sufficient motive power. The inner inclination of the soul is different; the heart, the deepest disposition of the soul, is renewed. The Christian 'Good,' however similar it may be to the non-Christian, is in all these respects of another and a higher quality; and the same thing is

<sup>1</sup> This expression is stronger than the authoritative doctrine of Methodist bodies warrants.—TR.

true of the evil existent; that too is now different. There is now a personality who truly desires the 'Good,' and that the highest conceivable 'Good,' with which he is fundamentally one, and by which he is ruled—the 'new man.' But also this new man is not at the first commencement a complete man. He has the incentive and motive power essential to growth, but he must grow even from the very first. The new spiritual bias can only gradually spread its influence over all the departments of its subjective and objective life, and this bias becomes the more firmly fixed by this means. Those who are dead to sin are under obligation to destroy individual sinful impulses; the new personal spiritual life governs the body and its members (Rom. vi. 1, *cf.* vi. 12; Col. iii. 3, *cf.* with iii. 5). And the more profoundly the changed person recognises his sinfulness, the more every advance in good is an advance in the knowledge of that sinfulness, the more matured becomes his conviction that to live the new life is a matter of daily endeavour, and only proves its reality in combat with 'the old man'; and there is "a daily solution of the great riddle which every man is to himself" (Ötinger). (This thought is all the more acceptable as it is in the final ground only an application of what has been previously adduced and said concerning faith as incentive and motive power to the new life.)

It is in this way, because conversion is of this nature, that a double error is overcome: the one that the moral life falls into two disconnected portions; the new life takes the place of the old in a magical sort of way; the other that, generally speaking, there is in reality nothing new in it. Man in conversion does not become externally another; but his thinking, willing, and feeling gain a new content, and what is more, just that content after which all those impulses that were good in him blindly strove. What he loses is not his true self, but the perversion of that self. This loss is therefore his gain. His turning away from sin and his turning again are a return to his home. For the Christian Good is, as we saw, adoption into the Kingdom of God and man's true destiny. In Christ man is complete. For the same reason both retrospectively and prospectively the unity of the life and of its consciousness is



preserved, and yet there is a new element present. The material which the renewed will has to fashion in conformity with the destiny now recognised is precisely the same as that which the unconverted person had given him, the inner world of his own 'ego,' and the world external to him. By patient labour it is his task to smelt this stubborn material in the fire of the new love, enkindled by God's love, and to refashion it for the service of the Kingdom of God. How inexhaustible this task is, is uttered in the humorous saying: "Man must first turn Christian, and then the Christian turn man."

The clearer this Evangelical notion of conversion becomes, the clearer is it that our question as to whether a distinction is to be made between the commencement and continuation of the spiritual life is to be answered in the affirmative. That spiritual inclination to the Christian good is either present or not present; the man is either converted or not converted. That is the more undeniable, the more frankly—as we just attempted to show—all exaggeration is avoided. It is on account of exaggeration that there is yet so much mistrust of that truth. Therefore it is necessary to explain the matter still more carefully, and that may be done the most simply by closer examination of the two subordinate questions which have repeatedly engaged our attention (p. 199). Is it possible, and are we obliged in spite of all the immense differences of individuals, to regard conversion as something essentially the same in all cases? And is it so, and ought it to be so, that somehow there is always a consciousness of it present?

These, once more, are points in the illustration of what Christian ethics is, on which it must be repeatedly said—How poor all formulas are in comparison with the riches of life's experiences! With this reservation we may note the following distinctions. The influences brought to bear upon the penitent soul are indeed infinitely various both in respect of those that are general in position, circumstances, persons, and those that are specially connected with the Church. Similarly various is the treatment of these influences by the individual. He can allow or disallow, and this again in all forms and degrees of insistence. Acceptance or rejection may have more the form

of an almost automatic act, or of conscious will; may be indifference to the Good, or kindly acquiescence, enmity to or enthusiasm for the Good. We may reflect how manifold the circumstances may be. Hence it is that "one is bent, the other broken." "Nail and screw get their due," but in what a different way! And good and evil alike form an articulated world. How do we stand to God, to our neighbour, to our own and to external nature? As certainly as that Good is finally a unity, and finds its point of unity in a right relation to God, so certainly is it true that one needs to be converted more from an unloving mind; another from alienation from God; a third from dissoluteness; and a fourth from worldliness. One is more impressed by need, and another more by the feeling of sinfulness. So in one case conversion is more the decisive 'Yea' to the promise of pardoning grace; and in another, more the creative energy of the will of God in the soul. Now, if examples are searched for from past history, and collected from the small circle of personally assured observation which may, at least for some special cases, seem to bring some items of the fulness of this series of possibilities under a common law, then from such examples the question is asked whether in any one of these cases those who are concerned have themselves denied the necessity and reality of a conversion in the sense above given, or, if the question could just be put, would deny it. St Augustine, Luther, Bengel, Schleiermacher are examples. In our present-day life the 'saved' of the Salvation Army in our great capitals; normal developments in the bosom of Christian families—all these, in most important respects, may be great contrasts, but in the point decisive for our present purpose they agree. All needed the foundation of conversion (in the previously determined meaning of the word), and this is, in spite of the enormous differences, similar in the deepest ground, exactly in the way the New Testament suggests. And here it is especially important, as far as regards Church influences, not to attach either too much or too little value to them. Especially important is it to recognise that the Methodist undervaluation and the High Church overestimate of the importance of infant baptism are inaccurate. And in

reality this overestimate does not merely appear in a dogmatic form; it is possible to attach too much value to the incalculable influences of the Church. If the question of conversion is regarded as superfluous for one who is within the Church, the earnestness of the Gospel demand is curtailed. It is somewhat different if it is insisted on that the conversion is not an intellectually cognisable process. In regard to individual susceptibility to all good influences, the truth may be insisted on that it is only when this personal susceptibility for the spiritual mystery of the Gospel is real and present that conversion takes place. This does not detract from a recognition of the infinite variety of experiences, but it preserves the definitely Christian sense of the word conversion. Where there is merely a weak emotion and vague feeling of wretchedness, there is no conversion of this type. Our God is, as we ever repeat, the only Good God, the perfect Father.

And this brings us to that further point, whether there is necessarily a consciousness of conversion present. Public exhibitions of fanaticism and undignified obtrusiveness make an impartial attitude to this question difficult. The importance of the matter itself surely demands this impartiality and makes it a possibility. Who wishes to contradict John Wesley, when he says that eight o'clock in the morning of the 24th of May 1738 was very memorable, when he, engaged with Luther's preface to the Romans, was assured as never before of the reality of his new life? Yet we ourselves cannot regard this experience as of such radical consequence for him as St Paul's vision of Christ on the way to Damascus. And now let us once more recall the plenitude of possibilities, as above mentioned, which history and life exhibit as realities. But if we should from this draw the conclusion that for this reason there is generally speaking no consciousness of the new life, because this consciousness is so different in every individual, and because within the Christian Church the recollection of a decisive turning-point is proportionately infrequent, then this would be a fallacy of the most fatal kind, and recognisable as such, because logically it would necessitate the denial of the assurance of salvation. We may be possessed of a well-founded objection to all coercion in

this mysterious sanctuary of the inner life, to all excitement, which changes into lassitude, and to the unworthy enslavement of souls in which it thus celebrates its triumphs. We may feel compelled to resist them with all spiritual weapons, which, in this case particularly, means to combat them by means of a theology which enters deeply into the great questions of the spiritual life, and to expose the soul-endangering uncertainty of a faith which is only faith in one's personal conversion, instead of trust in the cross of Christ, and to warn against the too great importance connected with this attached to personal experiences and memories—where? how? when were you converted? And yet, nay it is precisely at this point we may ask whether there is not a danger within the Christian Church of excluding the question as to a real conversion from the sanctuary of one's own personal life, and from any serious self-examination. But to enter more deeply into the matter we need more facts to go upon. All we would do is to put in the right light the high importance of the idea of the commencement and continuation of the Christian life. And it is obvious that the ideas thus discussed are equally applicable to the following section.

It still requires notice, that an attempt has been made to coin a special word to convey the idea of the preparatory movement of a radical conversion, of a decisive change in relation to the Good, and 'awakening' has been proposed. But the objection to it is not merely that in the New Testament it is rather impressively used of the turning-point itself, and in addition that it first of all designates God's work, and on this account is less suitable as an ethical term; but also in the latest Church histories it has been preferred as a term by those who show a want of reserve in their judgment on the inner life of others, and lack Gospel sobriety. They call others 'awakened' in contradistinction to themselves, 'the converted,' and violate Christian delicacy. For the less we would yield to a false fear of the idea of a radical conversion, the more must we avoid all appearance of abuse.



THE PROGRESS OF THE NEW LIFE, THE EVOLUTION OF  
CHRISTIAN PERSONALITY.

Terms here too are of little importance. We may just as well speak of daily repentance, or of progressive conversion, of sanctification in distinction from radical renewal or regeneration or conversion. Only it ought again to be remembered that the word sanctification, as specially used among us, occurs in the New Testament in another and partly more general sense (of commencement and continuance alike); partly in a differently defined sense (of a beginning strictly speaking), which is undoubtedly the usual one employed in our context.

The division of the present section is settled for us by the main aspects under which we explained the nature of the Christian Good. Man is a new man if he, assured by faith of the love of God, strives from this deepest motive and deepest motive power to act conformably to the supreme law, the highest End, in all his doing. And this 'new man' grows if he is ever more and more guided by that supreme Norm in every event—from this arises the doctrine of duty and calling. And he grows if he is even more completely determined by that deepest incentive, that unique motive power—from this arises the doctrine of virtue and character (*cf.* p. 9). How and why both these stand in inseparable and reciprocal connection will be clear later on. But how Christian character works together with faithful fulfilment of duty for the realisation of the highest Good is on the one hand discussed in social ethics; and on the other hand that realisation on account of the marvellous nature of this Good of this Kingdom of God, consists in the fulfilment of duty and the practice of virtue. And the discussion of duty and virtue will lead to the section on the fundamental basis of Christian character (*cf.* in addition the note on the main divisions of the subject (p. 124)). It might still be questioned whether a general explanation of the factors through which, and the laws by which, the new life of the Christian personality is developed could not precede the sections named. But the first of these (*i.e.* the factors) would only be a repetition of that adduced on the 'nature of the Christian Good,' and in part

that on 'the beginning of the new life,' without being by this anticipation, and apart altogether from any special application of it under the headings of 'Duty and Calling,' 'Virtue and Character,' any more explicit than in the earlier passages. In the same way the second question of the laws, if touched upon here, would not get much beyond generalities. For instance, if we spoke of a law of continuity or of unity or of degeneration in reference to the Christian life, we might say something just as indubitable as, without closer inspection (which is only possible by means of those concepts), it is valueless. If, however, we should illustrate by natural analogues, then, because we have not as yet defined those indispensable concepts, the danger of obscurity is great. Hence such ingenious writings as those of Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, have not escaped this danger, however imperishably valuable they may be as means of illustration.

Which is to be put first, 'Duty and Calling' or 'Virtue and Character'? The latter seems preferable, inasmuch as in this way the development of Christian personality is at once delineated; the former, inasmuch as so the teaching of virtue and character is without particularisation plainer; but subject to the objection that by giving it precedence the idea of law is made of more importance than that of duty, as has already been said in speaking of the commencement of the New Life.

### *Duty and Calling.*

The various attempts briefly and compactly to say what duty is, all amount to saying that duty is the application of the moral law to the action of each person in his individual case. We speak of the duty of a Christian not to deny his Lord in times of persecution; of the duty of the Christian head of a family to care for the proper welfare of its members in his own special way according to their special need. But we do not speak of a 'law' in reference to the pastoral office or of martyrdom. But duties flow from the supreme 'law' of the Christian Good, and find the more varied application according to conditions, gifts, education of each person. Such an application or individualising of the moral law does not in the least rob

the law of its absolute validity, or give up anything of its all-comprehending breadth and unique grandeur, or by such individualisation deprive it of its inspiring power. On the contrary, it is thus that the imperative 'ought' becomes a reality, in its binding and liberating energy, and in the inexhaustibility of its content. It is consequently precisely in reference to the idea of duty that antinomianism comes in: "I cannot bear that harsh, hateful word, duty, duty, duty"; and conversely so does legalism, in that sense of an inflexible feeling of duty that is censurable. But all the master-truths of the meaning of law gain their clearness from the notion of duty. In the real world the highest End can only be realised by a single will in a definite place at a definite moment, and only in one definite respect (p. 147); therefore the action directed to this end must be regulated in a quite definite way by the moral law. How are the pretensions of the individual and of society to be peacefully reconciled in any given action? (individual and social duty). Over what department of action does it extend? What moral quality is chiefly to be called into requisition? For instance, courage or prudence? How much moral power has he who is called to perform the action at his disposal? Or in other words, if the highest Good has been rightly defined, then the motto for everyone at every moment and in all circumstances is, *Do what true love demands*. But what does it demand from me in my particular place? That is the question of duty.

In the main this is as good as saying that the answer to this question can only be given by each one for himself. Otherwise we must keep back all of what we could make our boast as to the spiritual nature of the law and of the personal independence of the Christian (p. 160). The judgment of duty is the judgment of my conscience. It is not in vain that the usage of language conjoins these two—duty and conscience. Again, it is not as if the sternness of that 'ought,' or its content, was made a matter of individual preference. The conscience, as we said earlier, ought to be trained to continually greater sensitiveness to fulfil the whole compass of the divine will. And it may really be guilt, if I do not in an individual case recognise what

my duty properly is. But herewith the precisely decisive point for the present content is recognised. What was said in the general teaching on conscience (p. 64)—the variety of conscience in the individual, as in whole social circles—here gains greater clearness and an important application. For this reason all attempts to enumerate duties, and so to lead to the knowledge of a particular duty in an individual case, are of no value—for instance, that the general duty precedes the special, the absolute the conditioned, the simple the complex. Also, irrespective of the fact that these notions are not all sufficiently definite in themselves, in the stress of decision in actual life they are scarcely of any use at all. Life unfortunately presents cases that are mostly complex, so that the ‘simple’ rule is felt to be mere sarcasm. A decision available in all cases is generally impossible, nay, a contradiction in itself, as soon as the idea of duty is accurately conceived. What my duty is now depends, on the one hand, on my whole development up to the present time, on the ground of special endowment and providential guidance as well as on the way in which I have turned them to account; and, on the other hand, in the particular moral work which is presented to me in the particular moral situation in which I am placed. If we now call both these by the name of duty, and not merely, as is often too superficially done, only the last-named, then the only possible answer to the question what is my duty runs—Do what thy calling demands of thee. Or, moral duty is wholly and entirely the duty of my calling. But that is only another word for the same thing which was explained before—only each individual can finally settle the judgment as to what his duty is.

Still, this idea of calling needs a close examination in the first place, according to the aspect of it mentioned; secondly, according to that which calling means in the particular sphere of the individual’s work. The more we search into it, the clearer will it become to us that that other side of the idea must likewise receive its due attention provided the proposition, ‘Our duty is that which our calling prescribes,’ is to be both true and useful.

The quiet influence of Christian ethical principles shows itself with especial plainness in the widespread use and the great



honour of the word 'calling.' It means, put quite generally, the regulated activity of the individual in the associations of society—a point which will receive our attention in social ethics. And besides, by vocation in the narrower sense is understood our civic calling, that activity which makes up the special life-task of each individual, and accordingly necessarily settles his situation in social life. By 'calling' in the wider sense is understood a regulated activity in the different social circles in which we have to move without detriment to our special task. The merchant, the scholar is also a member of a family and of society, a citizen, a member of a church. The special calling of the wife is more one with her calling as a member of a family than that of the husband, etc. But whenever the word calling is used it is not merely an expression for something actual, but also for something important. Even he who has no calling, who can really be said to have none, takes pains to ennoble his nothingness by the name of a calling. 'My calling does not permit me,' 'demands it of me,' and the like modes of speech are often excuses for moral sloth. For the word sounds well, we feel a reverence and joy in its use. Only in our calling do we do something right and become something right. Glorious gifts, assiduous diligence, are profitless for ourselves and for others without the firm grasp on the idea of a calling. Why is that so? and why is it that it has such singular importance in Christian ethics?

Calling in the New Testament is the 'effectual calling' of us by God into the Kingdom. But now, as this, the highest End of all Christian moral action, is, as we saw, an articulated whole of single ends, and each single End in this whole must realise a part of that whole, so the New Testament itself paves the way for the easily intelligible usage of speech, according to which the earthly sphere of our activity—in which God's calling into His Kingdom meets us—is, because we take that earthly calling in earnest for the purposes of the spiritual kingdom, designated our 'calling.' St Paul says (1 Cor. vii. 20), "Let each remain in the calling wherewith he is called," and although it is certain that the word here means our heavenly calling, yet Luther's translation hits off its significance, "in the

state of life in which he is called." This sublime idea we may put into the formula, "Without an earthly calling there is no heavenly calling, and without a heavenly calling there is no earthly calling." That is, so far, whoever does not love God and his neighbour in a wholly definite situation in actual life, in regular labour, does not do this at all; and so he does nothing that is really Good and is not a really good man, a Christian character. He therefore misses also his calling in relation to the Kingdom of God, his heavenly calling. "A shoemaker, a smith, a labourer—each one has his trade, work, and office, and yet all are at the same time considered 'kings and priests,' and each one ought to be useful and serviceable in his office and work to others." "A poor servant-maid has joy in her heart and can sing, 'I cook, I make the beds, I sweep the house. Who has bidden me? My master and my mistress have bidden me. But who has given them such authority over me? God has done this. Ah, then so it must be true that I do not only serve them but God in heaven. How then can I be more blest? It is just the very same as if I were cooking for God Himself in heaven'" (Luther). How many an attempt is made to devote oneself wholly to the heavenly calling in vain, for ourselves and for others, because we desire to realise it as our earthly vocation only, and so deceive ourselves. But also, conversely, without the heavenly calling there is no earthly vocation in the deepest sense of being a co-worker together with God and a real member of His Kingdom. Certainly it is only with respect that we think of all those who without this sunlight do yet fulfil their perhaps hard, poor, workaday vocation in never-wearying faithfulness. But the deepest reason for such faithfulness in our vocation is still trust in the great One who called us, who also esteems even the least of His servants. If we were to succeed in extirpating this root from all hearts, there would no longer be such a thing as a vocation even in business. We return with all this to what has been said earlier, that the highest Good both transcends us and is immanent in us, and that it gives to the individual as to the community the right of forming part of the ordered whole of 'Ends' and 'Goods.'

Still clearer do these two principles become if we consider whether they are applicable to our earthly vocation. Without doubt one vocation is, in and for itself, more nearly related to the whole of all the Ends comprehended under the highest End which looks to the whole of the moral world than another; and so, rightly conceived, one earthly calling nearer than another to the heavenly. And it is possible to think out a long series of stages between the highest calling, the vocation of Jesus Christ, in which heaven and earth embrace, down to the very lowest. If such a system were outlined we should have—if the full notion of the Kingdom of God is to have its due—to place on the one hand those types of calling which are concerned with human intercourse, and their advancement in the highest End above and over those which aim at the conquest of nature: for instance, the vocation of deacons and deaconesses above that of the mere scholar. On the other hand we should have to recognise fully—since God is love and the type of all truth and beauty—the value which a vocation with these aims possesses even though it is not the highest. We rightly feel gratitude to a Newton or Kepler for discovering the ‘laws of motion,’ and a Haydn and a Palestrina for their melodies; Livingstone for his discovery of the Dark Continent; the merchant for his gain; the statesman for his victory; and all may believe that the work of their earthly calling serves the Kingdom of God—work which is the fulfilment of ‘all good desires.’ But two important considerations essentially limit the practical importance of the statement which we have made, that one earthly vocation is, in and for itself, more nearly related to the heavenly than another. One of these is suggested by poetry, which sings of freedom and of the burden of every position in life; and popular language has drawn attention in laconic terms to the special honour and the danger of various vocations, such as the phrases ‘painstaking erudition,’ ‘learned arrogance,’ ‘learned obstinacy,’ ‘artistic happiness,’ ‘artistic humour,’ ‘artist’s frivolity,’ ‘peasant faithfulness,’ but also ‘peasant stupidity.’ The principle of our modern commercial life that ‘time is money’ has also its meaning for eternity, and the main terms in the vocabulary of the merchant, ‘profit,’

‘credit,’ remind us, in spite of all misuse, of the deepest foundation of all social life, trust, and enduring gain. But further, it is plainly undeniable that many a specially high vocation has more dangers for some persons who occupy them than for other individuals. St Paul pleads for the ‘less honourable’ members of the body (1 Cor. xii. 12 ff.), and Öttinger meditates on the women who there in the villages ‘wash their children, nurse and tend them,’ and expresses the wish that he may gain as high a place as they hereafter. That serves to remind us in particular of the important truth that no one may in his civic calling sacrifice, or as scholar or official neglect, his family. So then—and that is the main point—the deciding judgment of God only asks finally for the faithfulness (St Matt. xxv. 32) with which each has fulfilled his calling, whether insignificant or important. And according to this God sets him over much or little in the completed Kingdom of God, and entrusts him with his calling therein. Some presentiment of this eternally binding standard of judgment finds a place amid this world of earthly illusions in the quiet reverence which faithful men and women, fathers, mothers, teachers, friends, colleagues, gain from others, whether their external stations are high or low, and gain all the more because they do not seek it.

This Christian idea of vocation can by its own power overcome the hardest foes which stand in antagonism to the claim of its universal applicability. We may briefly indicate our meaning by reference to such phrases as ‘the choice of a vocation,’ ‘the man without any calling.’ Provided it is God who calls us, then personal choice of a vocation can only consist in each of us learning to listen for the call of God in our natural bent and God’s leading. This inner conviction is often rendered harder to follow by the misconceptions or vanity of parents. It is rendered more difficult still by the fact that only a minority is favoured by outward circumstances in the actual choice of a calling as indicated to them by the special gift they possess. And herewith emerges the host of difficulties which in present-day commercial life are antagonistic to the carrying out of the Christian idea of vocation. Are not innumerable persons in truth without a calling because it does not appear



that the work, the business which alone presents itself to them, can be called a vocation in the sense defined? Is it a vocation to be constantly mechanically attending to a piece of modern machinery, and spend a whole life at that? If we reply, that is not the only vocation of such an employee, that he goes from the manufactory into his family, then the accusation is brought forward that this too is offered up on the altar of the modern Moloch. And it is not merely in this particular sphere that we are unable properly to speak of a vocation, for there are besides wide social circles of those who are bound fast in the service of sin in manufactures, trades, politics. Such questions lead us deep into social ethics, and we shall there meet with them again. Here the answer may be given that, so far as such accusations are justified, they form an urgent call to those who are more favourably placed, to those who have a vocation in the proper sense, to make it a part of their duty to help the down-trodden and endangered to a truer vocation. The so-called 'lucky' persons are often without vocation. It is their duty to make a vocation for themselves by loving service performed, not as a new form of pastime, but with real energy and perseverance. If all society acted on such principles, so as to render it possible for those who wish for it to find a vocation, then only those disabled by affliction could be considered to be without a calling. But we know that even from beds of affliction streams of blessing go forth, such as glorify even suffering itself.

Now, after having brought home to ourselves the notion of what vocation means, there is no more proof needed of the above statement that *our duty* is that which our calling prescribes, and that this proposition gives a surer guidance for daily resolves than those artificial precepts, 'Absolute duty comes before that which is conditional,' and the like. In fact, if we realise in each case what our vocation demands, there is withal a far-reaching assurance afforded us that we shall do the right thing and be continually preserved from useless trifling. But of course no absolute security. For this calling, as we saw, is no simple whole. For instance, what is the boundary-line between the claims of civic and of family life in an individual

case? Still more striking is the fact that even in like circumstances of a vocation he who is called upon to act has his own special character and personality. The Christian too, as we may note, if we recall the teaching of conversion as above given. If, then, the proposition that duty is that which our calling demands of us is to be correct, then we must use the word 'calling' in a still wider sense than we have so far understood it, and in that most comprehensive way on which stress was laid at the beginning (p. 212). Hence even those who most reverence vocation—understanding the word in the sense usually given—are wont to insist on the conclusion that there are cases in which the duty of love goes beyond the sphere of our calling, and there it scarcely has a clear boundary-line. I ought then to ask which of such actions as are possible to me are of the deepest and widest concern; which it is that lies next to me and is most pressing at the moment? But then it is clear that the proposition that 'duty is that which our calling demands from us' is more a convenient formula, a practical and not altogether unfruitful abbreviation, and not properly speaking fresh knowledge. It is also clear that we are brought back to our starting-point, that what duty is can only be settled by the personal conscience dependent on its idiosyncrasy and the circumstances in which each is placed at the moment of resolve. In both each perceives and honours the call of God to do God's will at each moment, and to advance the coming of His Kingdom; in both, too, he sees his vocation and the judgment what his duty is rests upon reason. It is because the judgment is a personal one that the Holy Scriptures demand that it should be 'proved' (Rom. xii. 2) what God's will is in a particular case. Even all the directions of the most distinguished Christians how the will of God may best be done—such as Spener's *Reflections* or the modern *Queries on Conduct* (Funke)—can only be aids to learning how to prove it for oneself. Such independence, felt in conflict to be necessary, is still recognised in deep experience as the highest honour and happiness. But herewith we are come to the limits of the notion of duty, and perceive how closely it is connected with that of virtue and character.

If we now ask—still keeping to the question of duty—what then is the content of duty, there is no further explanation needed. All duty, Christianly defined, is the duty of love, as certainly as that the highest command is the love of God and of our neighbour. What that means has partially been already explained, and partially will be further explained in individual and social ethics. Only one point stands in need of special attention, and that is the so-called legal duty in contradistinction to the duty of love. This legal duty is so to be understood as to imply a concern for the rights of others and the guarding of one's own. Is there any place in Christian ethics for this notion of legal duty? Have we not just declared that all duty, Christianly defined, is the duty of love? The distinction lies in the earlier definition (p. 216) of the relation between love and 'law.' These distinctions will appear fully justified precisely when applied to difficult situations in actual individual life. This is emphatically true of to-day. For we do not need to select examples from the past of that depreciation and rejection of legal duty, particularly the duty of preserving our own rights. In our midst at the present time Tolstoy combats the idea with an enthusiasm and devotion comparable to those of the great protagonist of the past, St Francis of Assisi. From childhood—he relates of himself—he had been instructed to respect those arrangements which by the use of force protected him from the bad man, taught him to defend himself against the wrong-doer, and to revenge injury by force. "Everything belonging to me—my peace, the safety of my person, my property—all rested on the law, 'a tooth for a tooth.' But Christ says, 'Resist not evil.' I understand that He means just what He says. Obedience to this unrespected command of Christ would regenerate the world. If men would only cease altogether from insisting on their rights!" Thus the literal understanding of the Sermon on the Mount (St Matt. v. 21–28) has the effect on Tolstoy of a new commandment. He sums it up in five precepts, but that which is here relevant is the fourth and certainly the master-law. And we apprehend that he has found innumerable admirers. Legal right formulated by modern society

down to the finest ramifications, but in the absence of love grown to be thousandfold wrongs, has awakened a yearning for a love to which 'rights' appear worthless, and even as the occasion of our misery. Let us leave out any judgment how far the enthusiasm for Tolstoy is followed by obedience to his teaching, or merely a new form of flabby pleasure-seeking, which seeks a brief gratification of a taste for the sensational. Let us simply examine what amount of truth there is in that battle against 'rights.' To begin with, we are unable to acknowledge its method of Scripture interpretation (p. 119). It is false in method so long as its exponents have not the courage to apply it to all similar words of the Sermon on the Mount—as, for instance, to take St Matt. v. 25 literally, or even St Matt. xix. 12, which Tolstoy himself unhesitatingly twists into another meaning. It is besides condemned by the actual conduct of Jesus Christ, who did not, according to the narrative (St John xviii. 22), offer His other cheek to the smiter, but really did fulfil it in the probable meaning of His saying, "Resist not evil" (St Matt. v. 38), because He did what is more difficult, meekly maintained His rights, and by this means moved the soul of the offender in love; whereas the literal compliance would in truth have been a loveless act. In general, the whole attitude of Jesus Christ gives the impression of one who valued his rights in an honourable way unless he renounced them for the sake of love. In the same way St Paul, although he was ready for any sacrifice (2 Cor. vi. 3 ff.), still claims his civic right (Acts xvi. 37, xxii. 25). Irrespective of Scripture proof, if it were not existent, renunciation of rights, understood as a general command, is condemned by the experiences of history. The very opposite of the end aimed at has occasionally been reached by such attempts. But let us rather reflect on the profound reason why it cannot be otherwise. The question of legal right is most easily understood from considering the most universal statements of the relation between love and legal right, and after such consideration it is impossible that the real value of such opinions as that of Tolstoy should remain concealed.

If the legal right is indispensable as a presupposition, but only as a presupposition, of love, we immediately see the reason



and meaning of the validity of legal right, as well as the extent of that validity in relation to love. The latter law of love says that all such duties ought to be fulfilled only for the sake of love, really and truly for its sake. And in the Christian meaning it can only be fulfilled when it issues from this fountain, and where there is true love it will be fulfilled in conformity with this conception. Or it may be put in this way: the fulfilment of merely legal requirements, or legality, without morality is not Christianity, and just as little is morality without legality. Immature love at one time seeks its freedom in the depreciation of prescribed right, and at another time its bounden duty in making too much of its importance. But it is only when we carefully note the extent of the applicability that this truth becomes unmistakable. The purport of the principle here is:—Legal duty is to be absolutely fulfilled except where the agent, in the judgment of his conscience, regards it as imperative that he—this particular man, in these actually existing circumstances, at this present time—can only fulfil his duty of love (that which the law of love now demands from him) by setting aside just right, whether it be by renunciation of his own right or the infringement of another's. In these exceptional cases he must recognise the universal claim of law as in general representative of the claims of love by taking on himself the consequences of setting aside law when he infringes the rights of others or renounces his own, *i.e.* be prepared to suffer as a martyr. This principle may be carried through in all cases, and this alone corresponds to the right use of the much-misapplied word, martyr, as (Acts iv. 19) is said, "We must obey God rather than man." Ecclesiastical law does not perhaps come before the law of the state; but the supreme law of the Kingdom of God, the precept of love, stands above state law or ecclesiastical law, in such way, nevertheless, that he who contravenes the law does homage to the moral majesty which belongs to it by taking upon himself (if needs be) punishment or loss of his rights. If this consideration, on the one hand, is anticipating what we have to say on the doctrine of Christian ethics as applied to the state, it is still to be emphasised in the present context that the principle thus

adduced is as such valid equally in the respect due to the rights of others as to the preservation of our own. Of course, the setting aside of our own rights in order to fulfil the law of love is much more frequently a duty than the invasion of the rights of others. Our natural selfishness waxes only too zealous in reference to our own rights; while our judgment, corrupted by selfishness, all too easily palliates our attack on others' rights, and covers it with the mantle of pretended good intention. There is scarcely anything that injures the Gospel so deeply as the want of rectitude in its representatives. Conversely, the impression produced by patiently suffering wrongfully when it is the result of pure lovingkindness is overwhelming. And that is the reason why admonitions like that of Tolstoy can scarcely be valued too highly. They are a powerful call to repentance to Christendom, not to bury the absoluteness of our duty of love, which Jesus Christ inculcates in sayings which make so great an impression because they invite contradiction, under elaborated statements on the importance of legal rights. Notwithstanding this, all that such prophets would put in the place of the Gospel view of this great problem is false; and even in the individual resolves of actual life, the honest use of the principle thus adduced will carry us further than an uncertain depreciation of rights for the sake of so uncertain and precarious an exercise of love. Circumstances noticeable in family life and in Christian social circles afford easy examples to everyone. When these are weighed there will be little inclination to maintain the explanation fashionable at this time, that Jesus wished to see His sayings literally fulfilled in the brotherhood of His true disciples; or to agree with the pretensions of a Protestant monasticism which, by the renunciation of all rights, thinks to make a profound impression on a selfish world.

*Is the Christian subject to the Law?*

It still remains to be mentioned that in this explanation of the notion of duty, and after having considered the doctrine of conversion, we have now a thoroughly plain answer to the question, only earlier referred to cursorily, *whether the Christian is subject to the law, and if so, to what extent?* In opposition to Roman

Catholic legalism as well as to fanatical licence, and having in mind many practical difficulties in the way of making this Protestant reformed view intelligible to the ordinary man, the Formula of Agreement (Art. 6) decided that the Christian is spiritually free from curse and compulsion of the law, while it is certain that he and he only lives in the law of God; but that he, inasmuch as he still has to do battle with the 'old man,' is under the law in respect of its sanctions and judgment. This last power of the law they called its 'third use' (in contradistinction to the legal meaning of the term), *i.e.* its usage in jurisprudence, according to which it means the preservation of discipline and order against disorderly and unruly people, and from its use as a 'schoolmaster to lead us to Christ,' in which it means its purpose is to lead men to the knowledge of their sinfulness and to seek for grace. The aim of this statement is no doubt right. It requires to be insisted upon earnestly that the Christian has to fight with sin in the meaning of the words (Gal. v. 16), "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." But the method of expressing it is wrong. Both too much and too little is ascribed to the law in relation to the Christian. Too much, for the regenerate man is not even so far as the 'old man' is concerned 'under the law' so much as the unregenerate, because the battle of the former is one of the 'fruits of the spirit.' Too little, for even the regenerate man does not pursue an even path like 'the stars in their courses'; but, if it is true that 'to be a man is to be in conflict,' so is it doubly true 'to be a Christian is to be in conflict' (2 Tim. iv. 4 ff.), after the example of the 'leader and finisher,' Jesus Christ (Heb. xii. 1). Or, to regard the same matter under another point of view, by this distinction the unity of the new life is endangered; and the reason of this is that the character of conversion, as strictly a personal rather than a natural act, does not hereby obtain its due and unequivocal recognition. But we must, above all, bear in mind, in order to rightly understand the notion of duty, all that has been already said about the law, and especially its significance in Protestant Christian ethics (p. 158). Legalists and antinomians advance their objections to this closely defined notion of duty.

*Conflict of Duties.*

The Protestant Christian idea of duty is made clearer by the discussion of three separate questions which, if we look back, that is, on their long and complicated history, may be designated *master-questions in the doctrine of duty*. But in the same way as what has so far been said illustrates these points, so herein lies also the answer to these questions. It is remarkable that neither the one nor the other has invariably received recognition, and accordingly in dealing with them the three connected and relevant questions have not been treated connectedly. Their purport is, Can contrary actions be for the Christian at one and the same time a duty? This is the debatable point of collision or conflict of duties. Further, Can the Christian do more than his duty? This is the moot point of works of supererogation or 'counsels of perfection' in lieu of precise commandments. Finally, Are there for the Christian man moral actions which do not properly fall in the category of duties?—that is, the moot question of actions that are indifferent, the so-called 'adiaphora,' actions neither bidden or forbidden, but allowed. All three questions are (with Schleiermacher) to be answered with an absolute negative if what has been said of duty is correct. But a proof of this is essential, because these important points have not always been considered in their natural context; besides that, many of them have been mixed up with other difficult notions, the discussion of which is still of value in ethics.

When the collision of duties is really a question of a struggle between duty and inclination, there is no need to discuss the point at all. The term is in that case merely a fig-leaf to cover moral indolence. People set before themselves or others two courses of action between which they must decide, as if they were duties, in order to disguise the fact that they are slaves to their inclination at the expense of real duty. For instance, suppose I in sooth decide between my much too gréat inclination to good-fellowship and my duty to my family in favour of the latter, but my decision for the latter is affected by my desire to adorn my civic calling. The time-honoured



examples of the Schools (really worthy of discussion) of so-called collision of duties are generally such as partly refer to a supposed conflict between the duty of self-preservation and our duty to our neighbour (individual and social duty); and in part between two duties of love to our neighbour (say, for instance, kindly treatment of him, or apparent severity in order to train him, mostly cases of conflict between love and truth); partly between love of our neighbour and love to God. If we assume that here there is really a conflict of duties, we must of course seek for rules which may make the matter plain by setting up an orderly series of such rules. These rules are partly formulæ. For instance, prefer the negative duty to the positive, the general before the particular, the categorical to the hypothetical; and if there is some act whose moral justification is dubious, do nothing if you are in a state of doubt. It is instructive to examine examples of all sorts. Then we gain the impression that all these rules, except perhaps the last, are worthless. And indeed because other moralists take the first in the exactly reversed way, and with better reason. Of their unsatisfactory character we were compelled to express our conviction at the beginning of the section concerning 'duty.' They do not set forth any clear idea of duty, such as that duty is always law individually applied; and for that reason these rules on closer consideration must be for the most part reversed. It is no better with the attempts made to draw up an appropriate list of duties in order of importance, such as: Prefer the religious duty before duty to self, duty to self before duty to our neighbour! Why not duty to our neighbour before duty to ourself? And is there merely an alternative? And, above all, what can that mean in a system of ethics which has, as its axiom, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself?' and in which the love of our neighbour is so narrowly joined with the love of God? If we are wishful to be thoroughly convinced how insufficient all such rules are, we may count up all the conceivable cases in reference to the frequently treated master-example of the two shipwrecked men who seek to save themselves on the same plank, but recognise that it is only possible for the plank to bear one. It is as easy as

it is valueless to say that they are to enter upon a rivalry of self-sacrifice. Doubtless in Christian judgment such sacrifice in and for itself is the highest moral action; and without over-refinement it may be assumed that in a case of urgency of the kind here supposed many will put too high a value on such a critical decision. What the duty of one so situated may be can only be settled by his conscience. The person of heroic temperament will act differently from him who is reflective by nature, the man of ripe experience otherwise than the tyro. Or, we may say, we recognise in reflecting on these so-called collisions of duty that there are no such things, when we understand how it is that they appear to exist. The supreme moral End is realised in a rich united whole of graduated Ends, and accordingly the highest moral command is articulated in a united whole of graduated commands. But which of these Ends, and according to which of these commands, the individual Christian shall realise at any given time, a precept as such can never and on no occasion decide. For this it is quite unsuited, and the decision is made by the moral personality in accordance with his endowment, course of life, development, and in accordance with the particular sphere in which he finds himself placed by the call of God. In short, the different moral interests (*i.e.* those individual Ends with their correspondent Rules) are not the same at any definite moment of actual life in the consciousness of all Christians. The perception as to what is the duty to be done is the solution of this collision (not so much of 'duties' as) of claims amid that variety of moral interests, at the moment of action, as Rothe says. Thus our former statement of the completely individual nature of duty has been confirmed and cleared by this examination of the so-called conflict of duties, as well as also of the value and limits of the term 'call of duty.' For even the rules thence derived (incomparably better than those previously rejected)—What duty lies nearest to my calling? what does this call demand of me?—are only right if the word 'call' is interpreted in its widest sense; in which case it in no way gives help which enables us to dispense with a personal resolve (p. 218). Still more obvious now is the need of accentuating the duty of

forming our own judgment and of seeing that our conscience is trained in the highest school. The more a resolve spontaneously issues from such a trained conscience, as a product of acquired sensitiveness, the better. The decision is never a purely natural one, but has a moral quality. The two poles of such an education of conscience are, as has been excellently said, passion, which knows no difficulty of decision, and sees nor cares to see any collision of Christian moral Ends (not duties); and the other pole is Jesus Christ, who in earnest conflict ever recognises and desires what the Father desires. Our uncertainty, our long hesitation, is the result of sin, yet by no means always so. Of the growth in certainty of moral judgment Master Eckard's saying is applicable: "I shall be grieved if to-morrow morning I have not grown brisker." And the exhortation 'to buy up the opportunity' ('redeeming the time') belongs here. And that all this work can only thrive in the atmosphere of prayer needs no proof (see below).

Developed teaching on conflict of duties shows quite clearly the distinction and also the contrast between Protestant and Roman Catholic ethics. According to the Roman Catholic idea, these conflicts are so frequent that the insight of the ordinary Christian is insufficient for true decisions. Help therefore is given in confession by the father confessor. The profound reason of this want of independence has been shown earlier. The Christian is not so united to God that he becomes master of everything; he is not so far one with God's will, which is his destiny and his salvation, that he moves invariably in this will as a free child of God. One fearful result of such want of independence is that even opposites may be regarded as equally moral if it is possible to assign reasons for either. This is the so-called probabilism of Jesuit ethics. It has its name from its asking what degree of moral sanction, probability, acceptance an opinion must have in order that it may be followed rather than another, which really appears to be the more morally right, and worthier of sanction, in the place of the one which the conscience at first accepts. Naturally this moral calculus requires that as many opinions as possible, and as many authorities as possible, should be counted and compared with one another. The sole moral

authority, the conscience bound to the will of God, is subjected to many supposed authorities. In this way caprice has full play; any reason, any authority may carry sway in favour of anything worth wishing for. Moral freedom is annihilated. The favourite justifying reason that this probabilism is a protection against caprice in the father confessor, as against the immaturity of the penitent confessing, and by it both are saved from too anxiously busying themselves with dangerous and frivolous things, is not merely dragged into a curious light by the improprieties of which serious Catholics themselves complain; but they presuppose that continued moral infancy, which we have already declared unacceptable, is ethically justifiable (p. 112). All that is thus generally needed is a system of casuistry, *i.e.* a systematic treatise of single moral questions irrespective of the conscience of the individual, and this casuistry it is that leads to probabilism. How this Jesuit theory of supposed conflict of duties is connected and even coincides with an unmoral idea of expediency, and further still with that of supererogatory duty, will become clear when these points are discussed.

Among the cases of so-called collision of duties is the very old one of the conflict between a duty of love and a duty to truth, and even the individual examples are fixed by a firm tradition—such questions as the lie in jest, the polite lie, the pædagogic lie. For instance, the case of saving an innocent person by means of an untruth, the equivocation by the doctor and the family to spare the person dangerously sick, deception practised on the enemy in war, etc. In such cases must truth give way to love? There is an imposing list of famous names for and against. Unreservedly against any sort of untruth are St Augustine and Calvin; on the other side are Chrysostom, Jerome, Luther. There is the same difference among ethical philosophers: on the one side Kant and Fichte, and in the latter case the majority—that is, at the present time. The names are to the point, for they show how inconsistent it would be to assume in their relation to our question the presence or absence of more or less moral earnestness. For of course the question of the ‘needful lie’ of the ordinary stamp, such as only springs



from the need of the natural, not of the moral man, is no more in place here than was the previous one of the conflict between duty and inclination. Nor can we allow it to be supposed that the question is not rightly put, or rather that it disguises a problem which goes deeper down than our present limits. Within these limits it must be put more accurately than is often the case. It may be taken thus: Can conscious want of truth in a definite situation ever be a moral duty for the individual? And the answer to it must be in the affirmative if our general result has been right. For we saw that any judgment in a given alternative, *Is this, or that, my duty?* is a matter of personal decision. For example, take the case which the ancients discussed, whether there are circumstances in which the wife of a sick man ought to keep back from him her knowledge of the death of their son? We must say, Here two moral interests meet in conflict. Which of these is to be decisive for the resolution in favour of one or the other depends on the respective moral positions in which the sick man stands and in which she stands relatively to him. It depends on this whether it is a moral duty to announce or to conceal the fact of the death. If we should deny this, and especially the morality of concealment, then we should be forced to give up the Protestant notion of duty, and even the Protestant idea of moral independence, and no pretended regard for the apparently greater rigour of the opposite opinion should lead us astray. If now the opinion thus expressed still is by no means universally satisfactory, to some appearing too lax and to others too harsh—because the former assert that the maintenance of truth is under all circumstances the sole moral duty, while the latter require the relinquishment of truth in favour of love in general, and leave out that proviso, ‘according to the moral standards of the persons concerned’—then this dissatisfaction can only have a deeper reason which has nothing at all to do with the doctrine of conflict of duties, but which concerns rather the question of the absoluteness of the duty of veracity.

The matter becomes clear if we put the question thus: Can untruth become a duty, viewed from the standpoint of an ideally moral perfection? Or in other words: Is truth an

aspect of the 'Good'? does it form one of the universe of interests with regard to which in each case of actual performance of duty, as we saw, a resolve must be taken? Or is it possibly the inalienable presupposition of all moral action which it is not possible to disregard in any case? A closer consideration of the above examples might lead to a solution of this problem, which is not a factitious one. A jocose lie is a contradiction in terms; only a pedant will object to jocose speech. To abolish the unveracities of polite intercourse is a duty often underestimated; a duty which the excuse that they are an expression of love to our neighbour will make all earnest-minded men feel the more insistently. In the sphere of education the advocates of unveracity are less numerous. It is quite clear what harm to mutual confidence arises from them; how unnecessary it is if a wise love makes proper use of reserve in teaching, and of the promise of later information. It is also clear that by the denial of the right of fiction true poetry is no longer possible. The more serious cases are by no means of equal importance. Certain as it is that she who conceals the truth from the sick husband acts rightly in a given situation, it is also certain that those so nearly connected stand on a morally higher plane, if they have trained themselves to absolute mutual truthfulness, and if they are one in their trust in God, who will preserve those who rely on Him from injury, or will in any case do all things for the best. There remain now only the examples of necessary self-defence and of war. In both instances the relation of confidence is no longer present: absolute mutual truthfulness is therefore no longer to be expected. But these two cases do not stand on quite the same footing. If the point in question is the relation of one individual to another, reservation plays a larger part than in war; and it is also hardly the same thing when in one case it is property and in another life that is at stake; and quite different if it is a question of one's own and not another's life. Stories like those of John Kant among the robbers or of Oberlin ("Look to it, God of truth: I did my duty, Thou do Thine") it is easier to turn to ridicule than to refute their profound meaning. In war it has ever, even among Christians, been specially honourable, alongside obviously allowable injury to the

enemy by conscious deception, to be truthful in personal intercourse, so long as the purposes of war are not affected. Still, this last example is connected with the special question of the morality of statecraft which will engage our attention later. Here the point is to deduce some general proposition from these separate considerations. We are compelled to decide in favour of the more rigorous idea (if, as pointed out, the question is one that concerns the individual), and can only recognise *one* bar to the sway of the truth, and that is when the relation of confidence between the parties is clearly destroyed. The reason why this ought to be so we shall find in the fact that veracity is the main condition of the moral intercourse of love, just as is the case with Right; but still more closely is truth bound up with love. Hence it happens that acting contrary to the truth as between individuals and where the community is concerned is different. The individual can be won by martyrdom for the truth's sake. This unique majesty of truth is willingly recognised when, as we attempted to show, the question is settled as respects individual duty. Such majesty of the truth Kant has in his mind when he says: "Falsity is sin against my true self-hood, against the manhood within. If I lie I degrade myself to a pretender, suicidally sacrifice my true self." And Fichte, against the defender of the 'necessary lie': "Then I ought both to believe you and not believe you at the same time. I cannot know whether your assurance that what you say you consider permissible is not itself a 'necessary lie.'" In definitely Christian ethics it may once more be called to mind how closely love is united with truth in the New Testament, whether the subject treated of is God's work or ours. St Paul thoughtfully lays the foundation of the ideal when he says: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another." There a possible boundary-line is drawn, not in an external way, but in such a manner that it cannot be fixed by indolence. More detailed illustration of our question is obtained by the experiences of life, on which often enough the duty of veracity is undeniably not taken with sufficient seriousness, under the influence of inaccurate or misunderstood answers to this question; and the 'needful lie' of

the German people in Luther's phrase is becoming more common, and rapidly, in a time in which Neitzsche proclaims: "Good men never speak the truth."

Simpler than this question of so-called conflict of duties is the second master-question of ethics, that of overplus of duty, works of supererogation. In Evangelical ethics the idea is absurd that a Christian can do more than his duty; and this 'more' is understood in a twofold sense, of range of duty, and energy in its performance. That is, the Christian man can only do what he recognises as his duty, and this he ought to do with all his might. In neither respect has his will any alternative, except at the cost of being forced to condemn his action as undutiful. This principle of Evangelical ethics becomes quite clear when tested by the case of Jesus Christ, though this may seem a surprising thing to do. Even He did no more than His duty, *i.e.* "He finished the work which His Father gave Him to do." Offence at such a word arises merely from our quite rightly regarding His work as the highest act of His freedom; but what is here true of Him completely is true of us in our imitation of Him as our model. And thus we also recognise the ground of this glorious truth. It is merely an obvious consequence of the notion of duty, as this is grounded in the nature of the chief commandment, and still further in that of the chief Good. In the judgment, 'This is my duty,' we settle for ourselves what the commandment of love to God and our neighbour means now, in the fulfilment of which we are now called to be fellow-labourers in God's Kingdom. Good and commandment are of such sort that they can be fulfilled every moment, and are duly performed at every moment, however little there may be of outward show; and that so that they completely bind the will, and make it completely free, because in this way the agent's true destiny is realised. Quite simply: in every action which the Christian, so far as it is a duty, performs he loves God and his neighbour, as he now ought, wholly, or it is no love at all, and he knows that he is in this wholly bound and yet entirely free, impelled by the marvellous love of God, which is ever alike to him.

On this point the general difference between Evangelical and



Roman Catholic ethics receives especial illustration. It is an essential characteristic of the latter to recognise action in excess of actual duty. It draws a strong distinction between commandments (the ten commandments, and the five of the Church, of which the latter refer to the observation of holy days and the attendance at mass on these days, fasts, and at least one confession and one communion a year) and Gospel counsels of perfection. These latter are harder to fulfil than the former, are not binding on all, but subject to the voluntary choice of the individual, and merit greater reward. In respect of their content they include every possible thing, even if it soars above the absolute command, special proofs of love, special prayers and special fasts, special trust in God. But in the narrower sense they understand by this three things: complete poverty, renunciation of all private possessions; complete chastity, abstinence from marriage; entire obedience to ecclesiastical superiors. These are the three chief marks of a perfect life, which is also called the 'religious' life of the Gospel (rigorously based on the Sermon on the Mount), or the angelical life (anticipating the life of the angels in this world). Angels, to wit, need no earthly goods, know nothing of man and wife, and always stand ready for the service of God in prayer and dutiful love. The life of Christians living 'in the world' approaches to this ideal—which only monks, and in particular priests, can unreservedly carry out—by means of those counsels of perfection in the wider meaning, followed as nearly as circumstances allow; and those who are desirous of so doing combine in all kinds of religious communities, among which the third order of St Francis is an immense force in the Catholic world of to-day. ①

The ground of this whole distinction between precept and counsel is an essentially different conception of ethics in its most inward nature. All that seems to us to be external, legal, detached, dependent, and isolated from the world here appears palpably before us (p. 114). If the 'Good' is not exhausted in love of God and of our neighbour, but the renunciation of the natural impulses is somehow something separate, then it is easily understood that this cannot be expected of all alike, and

even need not be undertaken at all by the Christian, as his true independent life must ordinarily be understood. By these works of supererogation the Roman Catholic ethics for the most part means those works which in respect of their content are not required of all. Regarded closely, that other point of view is, as pointed out, of importance, viz. that the Good may be fulfilled with more or less of self-surrender. It has, however, been disputed at length how far the 'good intention' belongs to a good work, and the papal decision against the thesis of the Jansenists that in the absence of love there is no true fulfilment of the law has never been retracted.

For such reasons it appears to us Evangelical Protestants that the commendation of 'evangelical counsels of perfection' is in no way a spur to the highest virtue, to the heroic glorification of love; for we ask, what is love, which does not give all? Rather with our Reformers we regard it as a soul-endangering depreciation of the moral ideal; a temptation at one time to levity, at another to presumption, both for the mature and the immature, and in both ways a source of endless scruples of conscience. Only we may not forget that the distinction is a necessary one on the Catholic conception of ethics. Also we may not in fairness omit to say that this teaching has always been accompanied by a happy inconsequence. Whereas we might, for instance, expect that counsels of perfection should avail as 'means of *special* salvation,' they are only lauded as a means of salvation generally. In this way the danger is obviated of Christians being separated into two wholly distinct classes, and the 'religious' kept from boundless self-glorying.

It still needs mention that with this idea of supererogatory works the Roman idea of meritorious work is most closely connected. Only it is by no means solely confined to this, as we Protestants are apt to imagine. The bare fulfilment of the commandments of God can be meritorious, and not merely following counsels of perfection; but in general only what is done by the co-operation of grace with human free-will. Since we cannot, according to this definition of merit, of ourselves deserve grace, it is (so far as the words are concerned) right, if what is in one point of view merit is in another grace; but, as

a matter of fact, the contradiction between this and our conception cannot be bridged over. To the Catholic whose ideas conform to the standard of the Church the forgiveness of God appears greater if that forgiveness places the suppliant in the position of raising himself to higher things. We Protestants cannot conceive how we are to be independent otherwise than by forgiving grace; free in God, not free from God. That again is a dividing line in Christendom. Only some persons happily do rise above this division in the Churches. There are Catholic protestants as well as, on the other hand, Catholics who live by the Gospel, however much embarrassed by their Church.

So far, the question whether there is such a thing as a surplusage of good action would be sufficiently answered, if it were not that frequently an impression is made on Protestants by the Roman Church's use of favourite Scripture sayings as proof of their position. As concerns the content of these 'counsels of perfection,' appeal is made to the 'counsel' given to the rich young ruler (St Matt. xix. 21), as well as to all found in the words of Jesus Christ and His Apostles which warn of the danger of riches, or are closely connected with renunciation of earthly possessions. Proof-texts of the counsel to chastity are St Matt. xix. 11 ff. and 1 Cor. vii. 6 ff.; for absolute obedience and the denial of self, St Matt. xvi. 24, and as special examples of it, St Matt. v. 18. The notional distinction between a command and a counsel is found in the parable of the unprofitable servant (St Luke xvii. 13) compared with the dutiful and faithful servant (St Matt. xxv. 21); and St Paul (2 Cor. viii. 8, 10), when speaking of the collection for the poor saints says, "I speak not by way of commandment," and "Herein I give my judgment (or counsel)"; and elsewhere (1 Cor. ix. 15, 17), "If I do this of mine *own will*, I have a reward; but if not of mine own will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me," where there is a free-will service and an enjoined office spoken of. On all such sayings we shall only speak in a way to avoid misconception, if we make a sharp distinction. What do the Scriptures really say about poverty, chastity, obedience? And what do they say about commandment and counsel? Much in those passages

stands in need of the most earnest consideration, in the same way as the Sermon on the Mount on our 'rights' and the passage in the Corinthians (i. 7) required attention. The indefinite feeling that it is all too easy to pervert such utterances of the New Testament in accordance with our exigencies is vindicated when we note that much of the Catholic teaching of 'counsels of perfection' is taken from passages which have nothing at all to do with the point. Merely in passing we may draw attention to the unnaturalness of the application of the passage on self-denial, when the content of the words is considered, to ecclesiastical obedience. But here comes in the second question: what do these passages say of commandment and counsel? They do not treat of work to be done at the pleasure of the person to whom it is assigned, by means of which he may attain a higher perfection and a proportionately higher reward. The unprofitable and dutiful servants, if we examine them a little in their content, are not two classes, those who keep the commandments and those who follow counsels of perfection, but the same Christians considered from different points of view, both of which it is highly necessary for us alternately to consider; and on the absence of contradiction between them stress has already been laid (p. 189). So far as the rich young nobleman is concerned, the issue of the narrative shows that he ought to have recognised the demands of Jesus upon him as his duty, and that this was the condition of his attachment to Him and to His Kingdom. In the same way the word in St Matt. (xix. 12), "He who will receive it, let him receive it," turns on the moral power of judgment of the individual who is to decide what this mysterious saying means in his case, and whether it is a moral act. If the answer is 'yes,' then it is his duty neither more nor less. Hence, even the saying which is, in point of content, related to the above of forsaking wife and parents may be quite general. And St Paul (1 Cor. vii.) plainly declares that the reader is himself to prove whether what he says is right, and if it is approved before the judgment-seat of his individual conscience, then he ought so to act; but that the gift of grace is different to each, and duty accordingly. As to the meaning, this is the same as we settled



in the matter of our calling. But here are no allusions to 'counsels of perfection.' In that remarkable testimony of St Paul's (1 Cor. ix. 15) (*cf.* p. 192) he says plainly that any other conduct would be for him a sin, because a misuse of his freedom. This is possibly the sharpest conceivable antithesis to that of following a 'counsel of perfection' arbitrarily set before him, which brings a reward. What he calls a free act is the moral freedom of fulfilling obligatory duty, and its reward is that he is a partaker of the grace of the Gospel.

If we pass from this problem of the supererogatory to the third master-question of ethics, to that of the *permissible*, it will not easily be doubted that this must be negatived. If the Christian can do no more than his duty, because in every single action he fulfils the whole will of God with his whole will, so far as it can be fulfilled in this single action, it is clear that there can be no moment in his action that can be thought of which is not in this manner determined for him by God's will, and not fulfilled in accordance with duty, and so no action that is less than duty demands. This first impression is also certainly the correct one, so that, generally speaking, these three master-questions of duty must either be collectively affirmed, or collectively denied; and that, if the first two cannot be affirmed as valid for the Protestant view of ethics, the third must be denied also. But, again, that this impression is the right one is evident partly because the terms are often employed in various senses, partly because other difficult questions are involved which are indeed still more complex than that of the conflict of duties and the question of supererogation. Formerly, the term 'adiaphora' was most frequently used—the ethically 'indifferent' actions; now, since Schleiermacher, the word 'permissible' is more often employed. The spheres in which these notions have come under notice mostly concern the pleasures of life, and, though apparently outside the limit, religious customs. Every conceivable meaning has been given to them. Some saw in the admission of this idea the end of all morality; others, a special maturity of moral development; a third party, a transition point between the two. Such varying opinions are only possible if different things are intended by the same term;

or certainly those who hold them are not fully conscious of all the conditions of the problem proposed. It helps us to understand if we no longer speak of allowable things or means, but of actions; further, not of actions in general allowable, but those which are permissible to an individual in a definite situation, and one neither obligatory nor contrary to duty (as we assumed to be obvious when we, in our context, were speaking of the doctrine of duty); and finally of such actions as belong in the proper sense to the moral sphere, not those which are merely juridical or purely natural, and such as are not yet settled by moral judgment.

The use of the term when questions of right are concerned may afford us the best aid to define its meaning for ethics. There its use is completely clear and unambiguous. That is allowable which law neither commands nor forbids, as, for example, that it is permissible to invest money so long as it is not at usurious interest and the like. This 'indifference' of actions in this sense plays a great part in the ethical sphere, as, for instance, in education, so long and so far as morality is presented to the will as an affair of external law. And in fact a wise educator makes the circle of what is permissible continually wider, with the design that he may himself correspondingly limit it in training the conscience of the pupil. What a multitude of recollections are brought to the mind of everyone by this simple proposition! And what a light it casts on the confessional practice of the Roman communion, which, dealing literally with the notion of actions of indifference (*cf.* above on conflict of duties), only trains up adult children—with all their boasted education—and not independent personalities. On the contrary, for mature Christians, for those who are in principle free from the law, for those who are 'converted' and regenerate, for those to whom the will of God has become the law of their own will, nothing is any longer either commanded or forbidden in the former sense of what is right or lawful, but in the latter sense of freedom all is lawful. Hence St Paul has expressly adopted and recognised that motto of him who is free from the law, "All things are lawful" (1 Cor. vi. 12), and it receives the most extensive application in the permissible use of all

conceivable 'Goods' (1 Cor. iii. 22) when he says, "All things are yours." But he said this, and could say it, because he wholly and completely set aside the notion of the indifference of actions. The Christian is at every moment completely free from every single external commandment because, at every moment, he is determined and bound to duty by the complete will of God, which has become a part of his nature; and because, without exception, he does all "in the name of the Lord Jesus, to the glory of God the Father" (1 Col. iii. 17), in the way that duty has been already explained. St Paul had occasion—face to face with special dangers existing in the Churches at Rome and in Corinth—to explain in all its aspects this apparent contradiction, "All things are permitted, because nothing is merely permissible"; and that in reference to both these two things, enjoyment of earthly Goods, and the Christian attitude towards certain religious ordinances. This freedom, narrowed by no external law—"Every creature of God is good"—has its inner limits, and its criterion is full submission to the highest Norm, which flows from a consideration of the highest End, and that in all relations of the moral life. Personal independence was infringed by understanding "All things are lawful to me" in the lax way that obtained at Corinth; for that reason St Paul says, "I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. vi. 12). And love was wounded: "All things are not expedient" (or profitable), "all things edify not." Both have their foundation in our relation to God. The Christian, to whom the world belongs, belongs to God (1 Cor. iii. 21 ff.): "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." In these statements St Paul has merely put into formal propositions what is actually given us in the example of Christ, both in reference to His attitude to earthly goods and to the worship of His nation.

Now it is precisely in relation to this full obligation to individual duty that many moralists wish to use this notion of permissible things. And by this they wish to express their conviction that the moral action which is binding on individuals cannot always be made sufficiently clear to the judgment of others in the way the agent himself sees it. The term

‘indifference of actions’ or the permissible does therefore in their opinion guard the right of individual obligation and sets up a protection against the attacks of others, and is not merely opening a door to personal caprice. The purpose is clear and justifiable, the means of realising it not suitable. In practice the term only too easily gets used in favour of libertinism. A long history illustrates this, as, for example, the Jesuit use of the notion. In theory it is also unsuitable for the purpose of the question at issue, which is, whether moral actions are not, so far as the consciousness of the agent is concerned, embraced in the notion of duty, and whether there can for him be such a thing as doing less than his duty; and not whether his individual performance of his duties is intelligible to a second person. This proposal to retain the notion of the ‘permissible’ is instructive, because it vividly emphasises the purely individual character of duty, on which we have in our whole ethical doctrine laid especial stress.

The consideration still remains whether the negative answer to our question—or, put the other way, whether the assertion that all moral action is measured by the idea of duty—can be proved to be correct in all cases in human life. Two groups have been discriminated—choice of a calling, marriage, and the like; and, on the other hand, the province of recreation. In regard to the first, decision is easy. No one will wish to deny that resolves so important should be taken with a full consciousness of moral urgency, which, of course, is a matter for the judgment of the individual. But this grants for our context that there is at bottom nothing merely ‘permissible’ in the moral life. That, as a matter of fact, men often enough act quite otherwise, and according to the individual position of the persons concerned cannot but act otherwise, is indubitable, but does not affect the principle. At the stage of moral development which these persons have reached it has not become clear to them that this or that action should be done on the principle of duty. They are so far still at the legalist standpoint of those for whom that is allowed which the law or custom allows, so far as they have conceived it, and which has not been actually forbidden. More difficult is the question of recreation.



The objection appears to be irrefutable—to have a consciousness of fulfilling a duty with regard to recreation and asking ‘What?’ ‘How?’ ‘How much?’ and the like is inconsistent with the very idea of recreation. The notion of a recreation implicates the consciousness of permission to take it, the consciousness, that is, of special freedom. But those who defend the idea of the ‘permissible’ emphasise emphatically that recreation in its range and content must not merely generally correspond to the idiosyncrasy of an individual as his own personal affair, but that subsequent reflection, or the judgment of others down to minute detail, may bring home to him that a particular recreation is contrary to duty. In such cases at all events even those who favour the notion of the merely permissible would find this a contradiction to the notion of recreation; for in these cases they even likewise assert that the idea of duty is determinative. But generally it is not easy to see why the notions of duty and recreation are contradictory, provided that duty—as is done by those who favour it—is taken in a strictly Evangelical sense, so that the idea of making recreation a duty cannot arise. If it is merely intended to assert that generally speaking the judgment of duty so far as recreation is concerned is not entertained with full consciousness, this is right. But the same thing is true also in regard to other provinces, and only in an especial measure applies to recreation, since this province is, as it were, concerned with the outermost circle of that kind of subject-matter which in its normal development only receives an ethical stamp quite gradually, and generally only under certain circumstances. Undeniably the moral tactfulness of a virtuous character plays a greater part than conscious judgment of what belongs to duty in such cases. In other words, we have here once more reached a point in which it appears that the doctrine of duty only in connection with the theory of virtue can exhaustively represent the development of Christian moral personality. But in order to avoid the appearance of allowing that this our principle has need in regard to recreation to fear entering into the consideration of the customary objections, we may still point out that even the choice of a walk (supposing that no sort of

idea of duty comes into consideration, in which case even the opponent, of course, admits that recreation is limited by the idea of duty) may be made to depend on æsthetic inclinations, which, if such inclinations demand a moral judgment, form the ground of this individual judgment. But in no other case than as an hypothesis can such an 'if' enter into our question. Then, of course, the whole dispute is almost entirely verbal only, but the master-thought of duty might become more plainly prominent in the decision given.

As an illustration, a short *résumé* of some examples of the doctrine of the morally indifferent, which have historical importance, may help us.

In the Roman Church the question is one that concerns the meaning of the proposition that the end sanctifies the means, makes it morally justifiable; or, in other words, if the purpose is allowable, the means to attain it are allowable. The discussion has often been unnecessarily confused by the Protestant side not always making it sufficiently clear in what sense the proposition is at once justifiable. And, in particular, the notion of the permissible is for the reason given above to be excluded here, because this idea is employed on the Roman side to obtain an arena for the play of the moral will as opposed to the absolutely obligatory will of God. But that the highest moral purpose, and, properly understood, every higher means to its realisation, may require that which, irrespective of such consideration, is immoral, is self-evident. For instance, the purpose of self-preservation in a nation demands the sacrifice of human life in war; and the saying of Jesus Christ (St Luke xiv. 26) requires, in the case of a conflict of duties, renunciation of the moral 'Goods' of family life for the Kingdom of God's sake. On the other hand, the sense of that proposition in Jesuit morals (freed, as in the ethics of St Alfonsus of Liguori, from its most damaging points) shows most plainly in the scholastic example that fornication is permissible, if by this means the greater sin of adultery is avoided. Now, certainly marriage is one of the highest moral 'Goods,' and on that account its infringement, if we are so to express it, is a 'greater sin' than the immoral yielding of an individual to his sensual

impulse. But the question does not concern the application of this principle to a case of that kind. For he who thus sins does not, in doing or suffering, sacrifice a lower moral good for the sake of realising a higher one, like the disciple who, for Jesus' sake, dissolves the bonds of natural love; but he cherishes a desire which, for the sake of personal purity, he ought to renounce; just as he ought, for the same reason, as well as on account of the honour which belongs to it, to refrain from the infringement of the marriage tie. The Jesuit fallacy is easily disguised when an inattentive observer has not laid hold of the principles that will rightly guide him. In a system of moral 'Goods' marriage takes a supreme place. It is not noted, by such persons as are misled, that the proposition silently implicates that a lower moral Good belongs to the same category as a higher, and such as can never, under any circumstances, be designated a moral Good at all; that is to say, the immoral satisfaction of the sensual impulse.

The Lutheran Church has twice engaged in conflict on the so-called 'adiaphora.' The first struggle, in the sixteenth century, referred to ceremonial customs in worship, and the constitution of the Church. Luther (here again the rediscoverer of St Paul) saw in such things wholesome and proper arrangements, provided they serve the purpose of edification. If this purpose is not directly contravened, then they ought, for the sake of peace and love, to be suffered, and even misuse borne with, and turned to the best advantage possible. Such arrangements are, in fact, merely 'swathing-bands' for the 'infant.' The same St Paul who, face to face with obstinate legalisers, where the truth of the Gospel was in peril, yielded, 'no, not for one moment,' and resisted the circumcision of Titus, allowed it in the case of Timothy in harmony with his principles (Rom. xiv., xv.). After the death of Luther, there arose on account of the Leipzig 'Interim'<sup>1</sup> the question whether its articles are

<sup>1</sup> 'Interim' is the title given to the three formulas (Regensburg, Augsburg, and Leipzig) as bases of agreement between the two parties, representing the old Church and the Reformation, until a council should be called. The Leipzig 'Interim' was the last of these (1548 A.D.). With Protestant doctrine the Catholic forms of worship were allowed. For details see Herzog, *Encyclopaedie*, *sub voce*.—TR.

congruous with this point of view of the Reformer and the Apostle. This question of moral 'accommodation' was—How far might they go in respect of those uses as to doing them and allowing them for their own communions, at a time when the imperial power thundered at the door? The formula of concord decided that in persecution confession is demanded, and compliance is sin; in themselves the uses controverted are 'adiaphora,' indifferent, good, or evil according to circumstances. If the question in this particular form is a matter of past history, it yet comes up again afresh in new shapes. How far, for example, does the use in worship of an ancient creed belong to uses of this sort? Who are the weak and who are the strong? What respect does one party owe to the other's feelings? Where is the boundary between justifiable conciliation and denial of the truth? Perhaps Rom. xiv. and xv. are chapters not yet obsolete, and to the wisdom of these judgments of faith fresh fields are ever opened in which their value is tested.

The so-called second conflict on the question of the adiaphora in the seventeenth century, related directly to the personal life, that is, the question of pleasures, especially happiness and the means thereto, sports and art. From the high watch-tower of faith Luther had said: "They who love God do not fix their mind at all on creature goods, for God attends to them. It is not the things that are forbidden, but disorder and their misuse. Use all things on earth, what, when, and where you like, and thank God. Keep free and untrammelled!" And with reference, for instance, to dancing at a wedding according to the country custom he says: "No importance is attached to such mere external matters where faith and love abide, so far as it is a matter of conformity to what is proper to your station." His praise of music is well known. It was from Calvin that a sterner judgment on these things pushed its way into the circles of Lutheran Pietism—for example, in its judgments on such things as the theatre, dancing, jesting. All enjoyment of natural things that goes beyond absolute need is not only sin by misuse, but is, according to this view, in itself sin. For only that is 'good' which is done directly and consciously to the



glory of God; and that means in continual self-denial, and fulfilling therewith the command of God; and so music must be religious, and our associations with others edifying. Dancing as bodily exercise, playing bowls for the sake of health, as at a health resort, is right. Taking a walk without this object in view betrays a heart which does not rest in God. Even children, as the severer school thought, ought no longer to play. If the orthodox opponents of those old pietists saw in such principles the denial of Christian freedom, they were right. But their own position was likewise a legalistic one when they rested content with showing that there was no express commandment in the Holy Scriptures against these things. This neither proved their real moral justification, nor won the insight that it is only the individual's judgment of duty that can in detail decide what is of profit to him. Neither was it plain to any of the opponents at that period that the whole battle refers to the province of the æsthetic, art itself, and that the questions in dispute that appear so widely separate, as to ceremonial in worship and as to social enjoyments, are connected. This perception—which we owe to Schleiermacher—is indispensable to a clear decision on Protestant principles. Reserving this for social ethics, we ought not at this point to refrain from saying that the pietistic opinion, although it certainly does not stand in the high level of the Protestant view of faith, still remains a serious means of self-examination for every seriously disposed Christian, whether he personally uses these principles conscientiously; so that he may in each case recognise his duty, and not be guilty of a misuse, contrary to duty, of the notion of the permissibility of certain things. For instance, many a thing that Spener says about dancing which will not here bear repeating as he says it, requires to be translated into our terms for their purely Evangelical meaning, and their pressing necessity cannot be gainsaid without advising weak compliance with the tone and taste of the average man, with the name of 'Christian freedom.' And all the less is there need for this gainsaying, as it is just Spener who has, more than the rest of those who thought with him, refrained from counselling external coercion in the province of education.

Our doctrine of duty and calling has repeatedly brought us to a boundary stone whose superscription is—

#### VIRTUE AND CHARACTER.

That is, as often as we have had to take note of the growth of the new man as a unique and grand whole we have approached this point. And actions done in accordance with duty are fruits of a good tree, and only good inasmuch as they are grown upon it and are not mere artificial adornments fixed on an unconcerned bearer of them. Nay, we may ask why it was only after the statements on the beginning of the new life, under the title of growth, that we spoke of single actions, of duty and calling. This was done because in this way the *moral* character of the new life in its development would be shown in the closest way. That moral imperative ‘ought,’ in its strict application to each case of personal resolve, does not permit the thought to arise that this development is a naturally necessary one. But of course because it is a personal resolve we should always bear in mind the unique person for whom alone such resolves exist, and for whom alone there are such things as duty and calling. If this personality grows ever so much, precisely by its acts, and develops in the way of fulfilment of duty, we must now ponder the development which is really peculiar to it. The new man is in radical conversion put in the position that he finds his incentive and motive power to the love of God and his neighbour in his trust in God’s love in Christ. The ‘Good,’ Christianly considered, has become the innermost quality of his personal life, and it is so that this ‘Good’ becomes the fundamental ruling force in him. We now ask how this force shall work its way from the centre to the whole circumference, and penetrate all his faculties most completely. If the teaching of duty was the teaching of the law in its individual application, then the teaching concerning virtue is also the same, as the incentive and motive power to the ‘Good’ in detail ever more fills the whole person, is ever becoming more personal. The variety of points of view which here present themselves will justify us in first of all considering the question in general,

without any reference to sin. Then we may fix our attention on this battle between the old and the new man.

*Virtue.*

In the first task thus set the question may arise whether the title 'Virtue and Character' is justifiable at all in Christian ethics. The German word is derived from the Greek,<sup>1</sup> and means the persevering direction of the will to what is 'good'; more precisely, since the word thus derived points to an acquired aptitude for good action, it imports a power acquired by our own doing, and that so that this power is thought of as a 'faculty.' It is distinct from right disposition as that which from within impels and qualifies for right expression. Activity is different from a merely internal state; so that it is self-evident that in Christian ethics the sole value of such aptness and faculty depends on the soundness, depth, and strength of the innermost disposition.

That this word virtue (*ἀρετή*) seldom occurs in the New Testament (used of God, 1 Pet. ii. 9, 2 Pet. ii. 3; of men, Phil. iv. 8, 2 Pet. i. 5) does not of itself prove anything against its appropriateness in Christians ethics; and the sufficiently probable reason is that for immediate practical purposes there was no need for a comprehensive scientific expression, and so much the less as it is precisely used mostly in the commonly accepted sense. Also it is possible that its misuse by rationalists makes it intelligible how it became suspicious in wide circles of the Church, and in particular of pietism; but this scarcely can destroy its usefulness. We must, however, exercise care, and avoid a possible danger which lies very near to its non-Christian origin. The acquired aptitude to good action, that is to say, put briefly, must not be thought of in a non-Christian sense as our own, self-originated, natural merely. In the first place, not 'our own,' which would be setting aside the supreme truth of Christian ethics, that all human goodness has its source in God; and that the commencement of the radically new direction

<sup>1</sup> Vide Kluge's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, sub voce 'taugen.' "The Teutonic verbal root 'düg' might point to Aryan 'dhugh' (Gr. *τύχη*, fortune). To this are allied *Tüchtig* and *Tugend*, *Tüchtigkeit*, aptitude, capacity."—TR.

given to the life is neither more nor less than the work of God, as is each greatest and smallest step in its development. "By the grace of God I am what I am," says St Paul at the zenith of his life (1 Cor. xv. 10), when the thought that his whole power was not unreservedly given to the service of God had long been impossible to him (1 Cor. ix. 16 ff.). In other words, we may only speak of Christian 'virtue' if we keep constantly before us what has been said of the reception of faith as the fountain of all Christian morality; were that fountain dried up, the moral life could not longer be maintained. Christ is and remains the principle, rather the personal originator, of holiness, as He is of that conversion which lays the foundation of the Christian life. And there is no necessity to enumerate the various words of the New Testament which express the master-thought of Gal. ii. 20, "I live, no longer I," in ever new forms. In reality there is, as we have often said before, nothing more independent than the 'good will,' the 'new man'; the Good is really his own nature; he is spiritually one with it. But this independence is dependence on God, taking from God, a continual receptiveness at all stages and in all relations. Thus the word virtue need not mislead us into the mistake of isolating one individual in contrast to another and regarding him as a separate personality exclusively as he is in himself—a personality which merely subsists on and represents its own moral wealth. God's adoption is only found in the Kingdom of God; there is no personal virtue separate from the virtue which manifests itself in love. Finally, virtue is no natural good which can grow like a plant, but (on this account the doctrine of duty precedes) it grows in conflict with our own nature and the surrounding world. There is no other certain way of becoming virtuous than by the 'strait way' of duty. This is the truth which will still have to engage our attention when we consider the means of acquiring virtue. But this does not exclude but includes the thought that the will, when once guided and really determined in the direction of the Good, becomes a will which is ever more and more directed to what is good. When we were speaking of the doctrine of freedom we recognised that every free resolve of the will binds us either in



the one direction or the other, that an evil deed has its curse and a good deed its blessing, in its inner influence on all subsequent acts.

From all of which it is clear that the word virtue is the least questionable, simplest, and also, in comparison and contrast with others, the most suitable expression of the one master-point of view from which we must consider the development of Christian personality. It is scarcely necessary still to give emphatic expression to the thought that, as the supreme Christian End and the supreme Christian Rule is a whole, so at the bottom Christian virtue is one; that is, the capacity of the will, acquired by practice, to be continually guided by the deepest motives, for the highest End and according to the best Rule. Just as it is obvious that as there is a system of Ends and Norms, so that one 'virtue' is divided into many virtues. The opposite to virtue is strictly speaking the non-virtuous. We may speak of an unvirtuous act. Vice signifies only definite perverseness of the will, whether it be momentary, or a perversion that has laid hold of the inner man; and in either case only when a considerable measure of readiness for evil has been reached. Discourteousness is not a vice, neither is cowardice, but certainly drunkenness and deceit are vices; and all of these are unvirtuous acts.

### *Character.*

The term character has the closest relationship to the word virtue so defined. This too means a permanent direction of the will to the 'Good' which is self-acquired. The usual connotation points to this, which is that character<sup>1</sup> is something determined and firm, in contradistinction to the softness and plasticity of such material as may be fashioned into any form. A virtuous man and a man of character are at bottom the same. But a virtuous man is not he who possesses one or the other virtue, but who exhibits the quality of 'virtue' considered as a generic unity. We think then, when we use

<sup>1</sup> Character is from a Greek word meaning to engrave, as on a seal or stamp. It is thus represented by the German word *Gepräge*, a stamp, which is here used.—TR.

the word character, on the constancy of the good will, not of the will as apprehended in isolated acts, nor generally speaking of this kind of activity at all, but of the inner nature of the man, and, in contradistinction to original disposition, of an aptitude which has already been tested; and on that account we speak also, instead of using the word 'character,' of a *personality* which is an independent whole. But there is something more that is expressly meant by the term character, and that is that all the faculties are morally trained and have received a moral stamp. Explicitly we think of the given material which is being fashioned. And inasmuch as this material, in spite of essential similarity, is individually different, there are just as many different Christian characters. The natural peculiarity of the individual we call comprehensively temperament. Special gifts, particularly in the province of knowledge or of art, we name talents, after St Matt. xxv. 14 ff., where originally that which is spoken of is of sums of money placed in trust. Special abilities in general are called gifts, and, when they are used in the conscious service of the highest End, gifts of grace or charismata; and by this means emphasis is laid upon their origin from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4 ff.). Of special importance in regard to the variety of equipment which we call temperament is the varying degree of emotional mobility and the character of the will; and that both as regards the susceptibility to impressions and the reflex action of the mind on the impressions received. These are the temperamental differences so much spoken of, the importance of which is not doubtful merely because of the insecurity of their boundary-lines. In a brief form we may be able the soonest to say: the choleric and phlegmatic temperaments are closest related to the will, the sanguine and melancholy to the emotions. In the first-mentioned temperament excitability is prevaillingly small, and in the last prevaillingly great. Then it is at once clear how every temperament has its own excellences and dangers, and plainly too in regard to the development of Christian character; but it never actually happens that there is no commixture. To this variety of natural disposition in individual cases, when we are speaking

of the given material on which the moral stamp is to be engraven, we have to add the general distinctions of sex, age, nationality, social position. If we reflect on all these, we are easily convinced, also in this place, how little in Christian ethics any formula can exhaust the fulness of life. But it is a claim of Christian ethics, and the conviction of its exponents, that no hindrance which arises from this resisting material can render the education of Christian character impossible, and no natural advantage which that material possesses render it unnecessary. What is true of the commencement in conversion is true quite in the same way of the progress of the spiritual life. All ought to become Christian characters; all can so become. Every character has its own peculiar impress; but in all there is unity in the innermost direction of the soul to the highest End, in subjection under the self-same royal law of love from the deepest motive, and that the love of God experienced in faith. No Christian is like another, as no man is like another; but they are one in Christ, who is the New Man from whose spiritual fulness they draw the power to use His inexhaustible riches in an especial way for their own good. It is only in this unity and diversity of character that there is a Kingdom of God; and it is explicitly a measure of the ripeness of our own character how far respect for the idiosyncrasy of other Christian characters has been developed in us. The predilection for pattern characters, and especially the measuring of others by the standard of self, proves that he who does these things is not yet become a Christian personality.

So far we have used the word character throughout in the good sense. But how much this word has emphatic reference to constancy of will, and the impress put upon the natural faculties, we may see by the fact that the usage of speech allows us to speak of a man of evil character, when the will consistently uses all the individual faculties in the service of evil. And so great is the likeness, so far as the exercise of will is concerned, that the evil will is in some degree in respect of form moral, and so far is will a presupposition of all true morality that a shimmering of the glory of the 'Good' falls even on the evil character. And this is not merely for the

fancy of the poet, who understands how by this means to gain sympathy for his hero, if it is only a shuddering interest in him. Even on the part of the Judge of all a milder judgment (Rev. iii. 15) is pronounced on the 'cold' than on the 'lukewarm,' inasmuch as the former is more likely to repent than the man with weak character; and in the case of its occurrence there is the promise in him of a subsequent special exhibition of the energy of Christian love. This is proved by many great examples in the Kingdom of God (1 Tim. i. 12 ff.). Nor does this cast any shade on the special glory of an early decision for the Good and for the harmonious, gradual development of the spiritual life.

Character and culture go together, because the latter means the stamping and forming of material. Expressions like 'cultivated intelligence,' 'a disciplined will,' 'a cultivated feeling' show that this shaping of mental material embraces all the natural faculties. Nevertheless the word 'culture' does not so expressly refer to the moral shaping of all the faculties as the term 'character.' Hence there is the general expression of 'changing ideals of life,' which applies even to the Christian centuries; and an appeal is made to seek to deepen the culture of character and mind, in the place of the more superficial and broader education of mere intellect, or a one-sided æstheticism. The acceptance of such opinions in society, and by persons who are by no means resolved to follow them, proves how deeply rooted is the feeling that no splendour of external refinement can delude, in regard to the utter worthlessness of it, where there is a want of high character. The question, What are you good for?—the truth of the statement, 'At bottom we are only reckoned for what we are,' find a place in the background even of the superficial consciousness. At least, men widely fear to openly contradict this truth, because it is felt that by so doing they may expose themselves to a morally derogatory judgment. But where it is openly done, then that limit of moral godlessness is reached which St Paul (Rom. i. 28) calls 'the reprobate mind.'

The idea of character, and in fact the word, is not found in the original documents of Christianity; but by the characters of



which it gives an account, and above all by the one complete character of Jesus Christ, authenticated by His life, it shows that the term character belongs to the sacred things of ethical terminology, just like that of 'calling,' and is nearer still than that to the innermost secret of the moral world, the love of God revealed in Christ.

To give in detail what the essential features of the Christian character are in respect of content, would necessarily lead to wearisome repetition (p. 212). Of course they ever concern the self-same essential relations of all the moral life—the relation to God and to our neighbour, to our own nature, and to the external world. Of that we have already spoken in treating of the highest Good, the supreme Norm, the deepest Motive of all Christian action, and must again speak in their illustrative application to social ethics. Besides, the tabular enumeration of virtues, still needful for the sake of clearness, affords opportunity for bringing to our recollection any point which it is absolutely necessary to consider under each such aspect as is done here under the heading of character; and also for the consideration of any other detail, which we can leave out at present, which it may nevertheless be indispensable to weigh when we explicitly treat of the formation of character and of our battle with sin. Still, irrespective of these special points of view, we may even now consider what that *feeling* is which accompanies the growth of Christian personality, of Christian character; or what is the fundamental note of Christian character.

So far as, in this matter, the question relates to the profitability of good action to the agent, we may also say it relates to his immediate participation in the highest Good—his enjoyment of the End which is still present even while he is on the way to it. Yet phrases of this kind are easily misunderstood, and of no great value unless all the earlier closer definitions are repeated or borne in mind. In simpler form, we may say the action of the virtuous character, wrought in conformity with duty, is inseparably associated with a feeling of dignity and honour as well as of blessedness and freedom. Both are plainly connected, but yet they are twofold. In

the idea of honour there is an emphatic reference to the idea of a moral Judge; in that of blessedness a similar emphasis lies on the profitableness of goodness in regard to our immediate emotional life.

Joy and happiness are experienced when our circumstances in life accord with our nature, or, to use a graphic phrase, when they are such as that we 'see we live.' Hence it is that one calls that joy and life, which to another appears as suffering and even death. The highest conceivable degree of joy, of loving contentment, is called salvation; not without the spontaneous background of thought that with the highest degree of salvation there is associated that of its greatest duration. Provided that our true nature, our proper destiny, consists in being good, in our actual harmony with what we ought to be, then must the realisation of that our true nature be accompanied by a feeling of the highest conceivable joy, of, in a word, blessedness or salvation. That is, it is in the moral life that we find our true life. It is not merely that blessedness may follow good action and goodness—that would be a blessedness alien in kind, and then goodness would be a means to an end foreign in character to those means, and in comparison with it lower. In fact, the New Testament, however much it avoids the restriction, on good grounds, of our blessedness to the world of our earthly experience, is full of passages which praise the height, depth, the absolute incomparableness of the blessedness of salvation now experienced by the Christian. It might be profitable to exhibit them in detail; such words as joy, peace, life, blessedness, rejoicing in oneself, and others, in all their shades of meaning and inexhaustible applications. We can then be convinced how unfounded is the reproach that Christian ethics is gloomy and joyless; as unfounded as the other assertion that it finally means the search for sensuous enjoyment. It leaves these contradictions behind, and is effective in composing the ancient strife which repeats itself in every breast, between virtue and happiness. It is the ethics of inexpressible joy (Pet. i. 8), which is a "joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17); in accordance with its origin inseparably one with the joy of the ONE who with such mystical openness witnesses of His joy,

of that joy which is His own, unique, which cannot be taken away from Him (St John xiv. 16). Its ground is that He knows that He is beloved of the Father, and that He keeps Himself in that love by doing His will, and He Himself loves (St John xv. 11, xvi. 22, xv. 9 ff.); and out of His love, which is His life, His desire is to make this love and the joy of love in life a living reality for others. This joy is not the inner reward of virtue as a moral power which is dependent on itself; but the happiness of a love which, eternally loved, can do no other than exhibit love to others. Nor is it the outward reward of virtue, but it finds its completion in the agony of the cross. For the sake of this inner glory it bursts the bonds of earthly existence and is a joy "unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8). It may easily be seen how here too all the master-relations of the highest Good come under notice; at every point Christian ethics exhibits its uniqueness. Without again recalling detail, we must here draw attention to the way in which the New Testament—and that in all its parts—makes clear that this joy, salvation, this enjoyment of eternal life in the midst of time, and with the pledge of future completion, uniformly accompanies all the activities of the Christian character, both those which are religious and all those which in the more limited sense are moral duties. Founded in faith, and in that pure experience of the divine love which it receives, it is active in the virtues of humility, patience, hope; in aspiration of the soul for God, prayer, as in those which belong to the love of our neighbour in their widest range. With special plainness and instructive clearness the first Epistle of St John says that eternal life in faith and love is now experienced (1 John v. 13, iii. 14). St James says that blessedness is experienced in 'doing' (i. 25 ff.), as in patient endurance (i. 2 ff.). St Paul knows of a personal glorying which rests in the faith of justification (Rom. v. 1 ff.) and in self-denying service for the Gospel (1 Cor. ix. 15 ff.). His powerful word, "Rejoice in the Lord always," he purposely gives twice over in that epistle of joy, the Philippians. This joy proceeds from the certainty of the nearness of the Lord ("The Lord is at hand"), from the absence of anxiety, from prayer (iv. 4-7); as from diligent meditation

on all that is "true, just, pure, and of good report" in human intercourse. Both series issue in the possession of "the peace of God" ("The peace of God shall be with you"), that peace which is the deepest ground of all Christian joy. But all this is merely the echo and explanation of the twofold unique foundation which Jesus lays in the Beatitudes (St Matt. v. 1 ff.). Why it cannot be otherwise has already been examined: even here we are led back to the deeper consideration—right to the sanctuary of the Christian faith—the completely distinct and unique thought of God as holy love. It is in Him that the reason is found why this prevailing view of the New Testament—that the blessedness of the Christian character is experienced in its activities—contains no contradiction to the idea of justification by faith alone (*cf.* pp. 95, 127, 179). Of course a question will arise out of this when we subsequently have to ponder the fact of enduring sin in the Christian life.

Next, let us note that in the New Testament the words 'joy,' 'blessedness' have a reciprocal relation to the word 'freedom'; and that in the sense that freedom is regarded as a Good, as life and salvation. Impressively does St Paul speak of never allowing himself to be overcome by natural impulses (1 Cor. vi. 12 ff.); of his independence of human judgment, and that he dare appeal to the highest Tribunal (1 Cor. x. 29); of his standing above the highest powers of this world (Rom. viii.); of his not being 'initiated' into any secret ceremonies, but into that secret so hard to learn, how "both to be full and to be hungry, how both to abound and to suffer need," and of that greater difficulty, how to be "all things to all men" (Phil. iv. 12 ff.; 1 Cor. ix. 19 ff.). And all that because he is free from the law of sin and death, through the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 1 ff.). And the service of God Himself in which all this freedom is founded is to him "perfect freedom." It is the freedom of the sons of God, which is now already a real, and indeed the only true, though hidden life; and which yearns for its full revelation, and has, in itself, the pledge that this desire will be gratified; and yet this life is Christ Himself (Rom. viii. 15, 21 f.; Col. iii. 1 ff.). We



cannot be surprised at this interchanging relation of the words blessedness and freedom if we but think of the nature of the 'Good.' Even here the Christian Good proves itself to be the perfection of all that is truly Good. We cannot define the nature of the moral life otherwise than that it is a life of inner unity and freedom; and we cannot see our true destiny, our real being, in anything else. But the thought of this freedom is empty, so far as it gains shape at all; the power of realising it is wanting. We seek this freedom in innumerable by-paths; and if we divine the right way, this, our presage of it, brings us only on a portion of our journey, and not yet to the goal. The will which thirsts for freedom sells itself into servitude. Our own nature, our fellow-creatures, the whole world becomes a fetter as long as we fain would regard this world, and gain it as our freedom. We have recognised the reason why this must be so. It is not any imperative 'Thou shalt'; it is only a quite definite one that can seriously put forward the claim to pass as absolute, because it truly leads to the possession of that freedom. And this 'Thou shalt,' which is the law of our own will, must be God's will borne by His might above the whole world; and also in our weak will led by the proof of His love on to victory. In short, we must once more say all that was earlier adduced when speaking of the proof of the truth of the Christian Good. But that it has (unsought for) again made good itself in our present context is itself a witness of the correctness of our fundamental position, and illumines it from every passing experience (pp. 20, 93, 104, 160).

The distinction and the close connection of blessedness and honour have already been stated. In the former the good 'character' experiences that to be good is the true life; the latter is the recognition of its moral value in any ethical judgment of it. Certainly there is no blessedness without the certainty of such recognition (even if it were in an appeal to the judgment of God unacknowledged by all the world), and all honour brings joy. But the notion 'honour' implicates the moral judgment of a Person, the decisive mark. If it is correct to say that the German word for honour is related to the word which means brass, then there was a sense-reference to

this fact in the word itself.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in the idea of 'honour' there is the implicate of the splendour of the Good as exhibited to a judge, whether this judge is the person himself or another; or, finally, God as the reader of all hearts, and the sole Judge of all. Thus all those expressions which at first seem to be contradictory find their explanation; as, for instance, 'to love honour,' 'seek for honour,' 'receive honour,' 'give honour,' 'have honour' ('have honour in the body'), 'a man of honour.' Shame is the guardian of honour; it protects honour from violation by convincing him whose honour is infringed that he ought not to have permitted its violation.

Simple as is this general notion of honour at the bottom, the way in which it is used is very manifold, as we may see by noting what is supposed to be worthy of honour and what is recognised as such. As a matter of fact, it has been made to mean almost anything, even opposite things. To speak more particularly, the way in which the 'Good' is defined settles in any system of ethics the meaning to be attached to the idea of honour. Because the Greeks had a different moral ideal from that of Christianity (without prejudice to that common foundation of all ethics spoken of at the commencement of our work), they had a different notion of honour. The same thing is true within the limits of Christianity: the monk, for instance, considers that his honour consists in blind obedience, which to us Protestants seems unworthy of honour. But still more, it is Protestant ethics which makes it easier for us to see that every calling has its code of honour in accord with its special nature. However true it is that much sin tries to conceal itself under this cloak—'It is the code of honour in the circle in which I move'—it must still be allowed that such code has a certain unimpeachable justification, since every moral calling has its own special importance in the whole of the Kingdom of God. 'Give the king due honour,' 'Our industry is an honour to us,' and the like phrases are but applications of the rule, 'Honour to

<sup>1</sup> As the Latin word *aes-timo* was connected with *aes*, brass, so *Ehre*, honour, with *Erz*, brass. But Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, gives the more probable connection of both the Latin and German with Sanscrit root "*is*," to desire, seek to obtain.—TR.

whom honour is due' (1 Pet. ii. 17; Rom. xiii. 7). The almost inconceivably great variety of temperaments—that is, of the natural material out of which character is shaped—illustrates the same thing. The greater the resistance of the material, the greater the honour of victory over it. When we look at this we see how, to the widest extent, it is possible for us to be sincere in our deferential complaisance to another, and esteem him above ourselves (Phil. ii. 2), 'in honour preferring one another.' The general distinctions of sex, age, nationality, give a different impress to the notion of honour. The child's idea is different from that of the man, as is that of a woman, whose notion of honour is different from that of a man; without any contradiction of Gal. iii. 28, but rather unfolding its meaning. Christian honour, then, which belongs to all, is, on account of its intrinsic inexhaustibility, infinitely manifold in its forms.

Consequently to everyone there belongs just as much honour as is due to his goodness; as much recognition as he, measured by the ideal standard, and according to his disposition and his special position, is found in moral judgment to be in harmony with the ideal. To the best belongs the highest honour, Christ; to Him who in obedience endured unparalleled humiliation, unparalleled exaltation, the "Name which is above every name" (Phil. ii.). No honour at all to him who, so far as in him lies, rejects the binding force of the imperative 'Thou shalt'; declines his duty to others, as the selfish man, who is in both these points godless and ungrateful for the gift of God which should bind him to these duties. The only scintilla of honour that may be given to the idle loungeur or the sensual man is that which arises from this fact of his eternal destiny, inasmuch as it is not for man to deny his immortal value so long as God gives him time to repent.

From all this it results that to strive for honour, for recognition by a moral judgment, is a task for the Christian which he cannot forego, a task of moral endeavour which cannot even be thought of as non-existent for him. "Not to be excited about trifles, and yet to contend for a straw when honour is at stake," expresses a really Christian thought, how often soever

it has been misused. Doubtless honour has its place in our life in the flesh. It is not merely a nation, but every individual, that is worthless if he is not prepared to sacrifice all for honour. Not to sacrifice all if need be would be not to recognise the duty of regarding our life here as the highest of 'Goods'; it would not be goodness. Hence even in Christian ethics there is such a thing as justifiable moral self-esteem, legitimate pride. "I laboured more abundantly than they all" (1 Cor. xv. 9). Self-respect is a Christian virtue, self-degradation is in Christian ethics doubly reprehensible—a lie. But a Christian ambition—(*διὸ καὶ φιλοτιμούμεθα*, "we are ambitious to be well pleasing to Him," R.V.)—is quite real in its endeavour to obtain recognition for the possession of true goodness, not its mere appearance. For this is hypocrisy, which is seeming to be good without really being so, the reverse of a good character, and the greatest and most subtle danger in the development of many a Christian. The German word is stronger than the Greek-derived representative, hypocrisy, which excellently represents those more subtle forms of it which a coarser word disguises. It includes every sort of pretence. The pursuit of honour and praise, that is, the desire of recognition of our real worth, cannot be otherwise regarded than as inseparable from the pursuit of righteousness. In the education of those not come to maturity the prospect of such recognition should be a spur to the endeavour to be worthy of it. To awaken a mere covetousness of honour is an evil in the training of youth. For those who have come to years of discretion the pursuit of honour and the pursuit of goodness go hand in hand.

But, now, the moral judgment from which springs the desired recognition of our worth is not always and everywhere a right one, or such as stands on a high level of knowledge and of purity of will. Our present statements only stand good without restriction so far as this may be assumed. In the actual world, on the contrary, we find that all the champions of the Good are now at war with the evil around them and in them, with the world and the flesh; and besides, the Christian needs continually to ask himself how far his own or another's judgment is to be relied upon in awarding or refusing honour,



or this moral recognition of worth. On this point we find a double warning in the New Testament, and easily perceive their connection with the highest truths. On the one hand, we are not to despise the worth of even an imperfect judgment, for there are elements of truth in it which a self-satisfied mind may easily overlook. Hence Christians are to walk honourably to those who are without (*cf.* 1 Cor. x. 32). But, on the other hand, all human judgment, even the best, even that of the Christian (and this particularly often) is fallible. To seek honour of men easily becomes a hindrance to reliance upon the highest court of appeal, the judgment of God. Even the tribunal within us cannot have the last word (1 Cor. iv. 4, "He that judgeth me is the Lord: I judge not mine own self"). Christ on the cross appeared as the least honourable of all men in the roll of the world's history, and yet before God that cross was the highest in honour, and to the opened eye of faith is and will be a spectacle of eternal glory. To dwell upon the honour which comes from men is one of the foremost hindrances to moral progress, and is a fetter as enslaving as Mammon (St John v. 44, vii. 18; 2 Cor. vi. 8). As a good rule of personal self-examination, it has ever been recommended to ask oneself the question: Does the thought of having acted foolishly in the opinion of our fellows bring deeper pain than the conviction of having sinned against God? Luther's saying at Worms, "They have deprived me of fame and honour, but sufficient for me is my Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ," stands on a high level.

In respect to violations of honour in social intercourse regulated by legal sanctions, those principles apply which we adduced above when dealing with right as duty. The so-called rehabilitation of this honour by the duel is neither harmless nor reasonable, nor necessary as an additional means for obtaining what the law already guarantees. It is not harmless, for the duel is an open breach of the law, a retrogression to the period of blood-feud, and in particular to that of the superstitions of the ordeal; it is also an arbitrary endangering of another's life. It is unreasonable, for it is not intelligible how by such means the wrong done by the offender is atoned for, or the

honour of the injured person rehabilitated. Neither for the one end nor the other does the acknowledgment of equal social rank, which is implied in the challenge to a duel or its acceptance, suffice; and just as little to the purpose is the proved courage of the combatants, say, for instance, when the cause of offence is the accusation of dishonourable lying. It is unnecessary, for only the defender of duelling will assert that all other legal means are insufficient, which are not really sought for so long as the prejudice in favour of the necessity of duelling remains—quite apart from its actual necessity in some countries. Of course, in this asserted necessity the real thought which lies concealed is the desire of revenge. After all, it is the chief duty of the depository of state power, of the supreme protector of social order, to work for the abolition of duelling by all means, and that on account of the confusion of moral issues which obviously exists in those strata of society in which there are few who are themselves addicted to this breach of law. Only in reference to duelling we are bound to insist that we cannot make any exception to the rule given as to the personal character of every judgment of duty. Whether, for instance, an individual officer may refuse to comply with this form of protecting his honour at the price of dismissal from the service, when also his livelihood and that of his family depend upon his position, is a matter for his own conscience (*cf.* ‘Conflict of Duties’). In some way quite different from the serious duel are the academic combats of students. The Christian moral judgment must notwithstanding be a stern one, on account of the waste of time inseparable from them: and still more because far more ideal wreaths of honour allure the youthful mind; particularly under the sway of the general notion of standing up for oneself, to say nothing of the desire which asserts itself in every young life to give much high evidence of a courageous bearing. Exaggeration of supposed personal honour and the absence of real honour are often quite close neighbours at the universities where such things obtain.

*Humility.*

The words blessedness and freedom, dignity and honour, already discussed, which are the fundamental notes of the Christian character, get their full and deep quality first of all by their union with humility. Christian joy, Christian freedom, and Christian honour are humble—humble joy and humble glorying. It is clear from such phrases that humility is not a separate virtue, but properly and rightly is that which in its main import and intrinsic excellence gives the tone to the Christian character, and is therefore the common stamp set upon every Christian virtue. For this reason it is that the word humility is in a special degree a Christian term. The New Testament appropriates a Greek word which for Greeks themselves expressed their contempt for low mean-spiritedness.<sup>1</sup> The Old Testament is on this point a prophecy, but not its fulfilment, for the ‘poor,’ ‘oppressed,’ the ‘afflicted,’ the humble sufferers of the Psalms and Prophets merely prepare the way for the meek and humble of heart of the New Testament. And even in the midst of the Christian world humility is not accorded the respect due to it, on account of the numerous misconceptions that have attached themselves to the mere word. It is almost easier to say what it does not mean than what its true sense is. It does not mean set reflection on the contrast between the finite and the Infinite, creature and Creator, nor the feeling of insignificance which thence arises. Christ, the example of true humility, is the Father’s Son, and He brings us into the state of adoption. And His humility, and ours in His likeness, is the opposite of all self-produced and so easily self-pleasing work, by means of which man, unable to throw off the pressure of life, makes that feeling of insignificance endurable. Just as little is humility simply self-humiliation arising from a continual reflection on personal sin or on human sin generally. Or otherwise where is the humility of Christ? And how much self-satisfaction may be bound up with a strongly marked sense of being a ‘miserable sinner’! So much the more readily because in this way by such self-torment the word sin (a word

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Trench, *New Testament Synonyms*, pp. 145 ff.—Tr.

which cannot be misemployed with impunity) is confounded with the mere sense of human imperfection, and by the exaggeration of its seriousness its true seriousness is lost, and the moral mixed up with what is natural. In justifiable opposition to that kind of misuse of terms, and with a clear reference to the New Testament, the view has recently been advanced that true humility means partly a ready acquiescence in God's providential guidance, and partly a readiness to serve His will, which is wrought by the joyful consciousness of God's love, just as the Son of Man, worthy to rule, resolved to be the servant of all; and that this willingness to serve is the measure of true greatness in God's Kingdom. And certainly humility is not a barren emotion; it is no wearisome, self-regarding virtue, which never issues in a resolve of the will; certainly, too, humility is the highest courage, and this cannot manifest its energy otherwise than in subjection to God's guidance in the service of others; and hence humility has express relation to our attitude to our fellow-men, and is not merely modesty. Still, the word cannot be taken in so narrow a sense. The observation already made, that all Christian virtues permit and require the epithet, compels us to give it a wider meaning. Humility is the reverential inclination of our souls to the almighty, holy love of God in yearning confidence, in yearning desire. It is in this respect the belief that this virtue is the childlike reception of the undeserved and inexhaustible grace of God. That this willingness to receive is the incentive and motive power of the willingness to bestow follows from the nature of God, and the quality of faith which is determined by that nature, as we have earlier set forth. In this master-idea, so taken, those other ideas at first rejected gain their justification, which concern the distance between God and man, and between the Holy God and sinful man. Yes, in its place and at its time, each according to his special character as an individual, each as he is led, both these sides of the whole truth gain a certain substantiality: "I a shadow, He, the fount of light," "For me and for my life nothing merely of earth suffices." The simplest and hardest proof of humility for all is that inner attitude in relation to those positions in



life in which good fortune demands greater moral courage than misfortune. And another proof is found in willing, joyful service for the benefit of our neighbour.

### *Sin.*

This idea of humility, too, like the rest of our exposition, leads us of itself to the explicit consideration of *character in relation to sin*, and so to apply ourselves to the task named before (p. 148). The subjects on which it is necessary to speak as to this matter are numerous and various. Let us start by saying that the question really is as to the hindrances to be overcome in the progress of spiritual growth; of continual 'conversion'; of sanctification as the task to be carried to completeness. Then we find that there are three clear heads to which it is easy to give intelligible distinctness of meaning. They are, the enemy, the weapons, the victory. In other words, we consider the fact of temptation to sin in the way the Christian encounters it; then the aids which are available in this battle; and finally the success attained. That is, we ponder questions which concern sin in the regenerate; the relation of sin and salvation; the Gospel idea of perfection.

### *Temptation.*

The word *temptation* suffers not infrequently from being used in different senses in well-known passages of Holy Scripture. God tempts no one, says St James. The petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," assumes that it is God that leads us into temptation, or why pray that He may not lead us into temptation? St Paul, in Corinthians (x. 15), expressly combines the two, as Luther clearly explains. The longer catechisms have not always presented the idea in its depth and freedom. According to them, God will protect us from being deceived and misled by the devil, the world, and the flesh, and in our contests with these will give us the victory. Many a time the old explanations are better than the new; when, for instance, a distinction is drawn between the temptation to evil and to good, explaining the latter idea by showing how in this 'good' a temptation may lie, and then afterwards

it is found needful to put the question, Cannot even temptation be beneficial? Besides this difficulty in the word temptation, there comes the other, which lies in a loose use of the words 'world' and 'flesh,' and their relation to satanic temptations.

Temptation is everything that can be a motive to sin, and to our wilful resistance to the will of God. This, of course, is understanding sin in the ordinary Evangelical sense, so that, as Luther says, "Nothing damns but unbelief." Everything in and for itself can be such incitement to sin, even the greatest opposites, health and sickness, poverty and riches, society and solitude. And this occasion for possible sin may be external or internal—for instance, a talent which we possess, however good it may be in itself. But this only on the assumption that this outward or inward incitement meets with something in our ego that is receptive and responsive to it. Hence real temptation is continual temptation of a definite person, and varies with the natural disposition, temperament, calling, and course of life. In the *Confessions* of St Augustine, and in the life of Luther, a special world of temptation is revealed; for Jesus Christ temptation had a unique quality, as, say, in contrast with St Paul (*cf.* 2 Cor. xi. 21-33; Rom. vii. 7-25). The word in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 15), "He was in all points tempted as we are," emphasises for our comfort the fact of His power to realise all our temptations, while it does not exclude but assumes that for Himself His personal and unique temptations were such as sprang from His special calling as the Redeemer (St Matt. iv., xvi., xxvi.).

Such temptation is necessary for every real moral development. It is in accordance with the divine will as the indispensable basis for personal resolves, as the inevitable material on which the fulfilment of duty turns. And this whether we explain away sin, or assume its immense activity in Paradise and out of it, as read in the early pages of the Bible. But temptation with the design that it shall result in sin is absolutely contrary to the idea of God. If it be said that such temptations proceed from the world and the flesh, then world and flesh are not here understood to mean that external incitement necessary to any actual temptation or

the susceptibility to that incitement which in our ego is responsive to it, but we mean 'world' and 'flesh' in the sense already assigned to these terms (p. 152) as plainly set forth in Holy Writ—the world, that is, in opposition to the Kingdom of God, the world as an expression for that interaction of evil wills everywhere present, although in incalculable variety of importance; inclusive also of the social arrangements which are its product. Flesh as meaning that nature we possess already at enmity with God: "Every man is tempted when he is led away by his own lust and enticed" (James i. 14). If this infinitely complicated whole has been divided into 'lust of the eye,' 'lust of the flesh,' and 'the pride of life,' that has been done against the scope of the word, and necessarily leads to artificiality and superficiality. With regard to the temptations of the devil, experienced pastors have often insisted on the necessity of using caution in calling those such which it is very difficult so to regard, since the test, whether hard or easy, is necessarily subjective feeling. In the same way we have particularly to guard against thinking those sudden fancies and impulses which emerge without apparent reason as temptations of Satan, because they often enough arise from abnormal physical circumstances which mostly call for the treatment of the physician. Neither may we deny the danger of spiritual pride in this province. All those who have room in their belief for the idea of a background of a mysterious world of 'offence' are just those who will be most disposed to insist on this danger. It is, however, rather a subject for theology than ethics. When we are speaking of temptation, we are also standing on ground where the Christian neophyte should put a restraint on himself, and be ready to learn in his own case from the experience of others, and especially from the great heroes of faith in the Kingdom of God; where he may learn of the strength and weakness of the human heart, and see the inexhaustible variety of change of feelings ranging from the joy of assurance of salvation to the severest spiritual contests. He is finally assured against all, who has penetrated through the darkness to the eternal light, and for whom the prospect of a great calm after the storm is one of the surest signs of

one earnestly struggling with temptation. This is the true preparation for death, and not weak trifling with self-produced dream-fancies.

This explanation of temptation (which really deserves to be called a world in itself) becomes deeper and clearer as we gain an increasing insight into the subtle ramifications of the interconnected psychical and physical life (*cf.* p. 172). All the master-notions of individual ethics, as responsibility, personal worth, character, freedom, are, in this way, brought out of shadowy indefiniteness into the full daylight of reality. We may form some conjecture of the infinite variety in the comrades we have in this great battle of temptation, which is fought for the most part in secret. We learn to understand others, and gain caution in judging them. We give heed for ourselves even to that which is apparently trifling, which can have such serious consequences. We find our responsibility no longer merely in the moments of clear resolve, but in the secret most insignificant beginnings; everything is important and significant. The exhortation to "watch and pray," to manliness and firmness, becomes a living word for our daily life. Especially is heedfulness of the temptation which is dangerous to an individual from his idiosyncrasy increased. The ancient saying, "Sin which lurks at the door," is true of everyone, but of everyone in a different way. The lurking beast at the door is not always the same, and the battle is not always the same. To 'flee' is one way, and another is "to starve the beasts out, give them nothing to graze on in thy thoughts, and they grow lean and languid." Instead of that we feed them on the titbits of our fancy or the products of the lascivious imaginations of others.

That everything may be a source of temptation, fortune or misfortune, has been above suggested; yet with good reason a special word or two must be devoted to suffering, in consonance with our immediate feeling of its significance in such connection. Temptation from this source affects all those sides of the moral life so often named. Suffering makes us unruly, loveless, godless, unless there is some counterbalancing influence brought to bear. Honest self-judgment stands astonished at the way in



which it can make us stupid and indifferent towards things above, outside us or within us, and often so quickly. Complaining rebellion against fate, hardness and tyranny towards our neighbour, anxious and eager care for our personal well-being, is only apparent strength, and is in truth moral weakness. Suffering for the purpose of punishment no longer exists for him who is a child of God. This is most clearly seen in those sufferings which have their real origin in the sins and errors of earlier life, and even of our after life. They can become temptations, such as we call severe temptation to unbelief, or a trial arising from doubt why it is that God does not remove the suffering if peace with God is a reality (Rom. v. 1). But then the victory consists in the firmly fixed faith that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," that that kind of suffering, however bitter it may be to our feelings, is yet no longer punishment, but the discipline of fatherly love, which—the very opposite of all human arbitrariness—in a wonderful way helps us forward to the goal of perfection (Heb. xii. 5). Such suffering has always been regarded as a sanctuary in the stillness of which it is only the sufferer himself who can find the proper answer to the questions: Why is this particular suffering sent to me? How far am I to meet it by work and prayer? (2 Cor. xii.). In what way can it be made to serve my best interests? How much Christian reflection has busied itself with this life-question of suffering is witnessed by the number of words which have on them the impress of the various sides of this educative power of suffering. In respect of the result for the sufferer are such words as refer to 'proving,' 'purifying,' 'perfecting' power; and designations famous in Christian ethics are such as 'martyr,' 'witness' in sufferings for others and to the glory of God, inexhaustibly illustrated in the picture-gallery of histories of saints, of the Scriptures, and the Church. All suffering attains its highest consecration when it is dignified by the name of the Cross, and a truly reverent piety will watch jealously lest, in common speech, this word should be misused by application to any pain which the natural heart shuns. It is only bearing the 'Cross' after Christ in the strictest sense when suffering is borne in the power of the

atoning Cross of Christ, in the spirit of His obedient faith and His patient love. All sufferings, of course, in respect of range can be subsumed under this head, however distinct the outward form of the suffering may be. In the chief place stands conscious sorrow over others' sin, enduring sympathy with others' deepest need.

### *Suicide.*

Here, where the question spoken of is of suffering as temptation, is probably the right place to consider the morality of suicide. For in Christian ethics it is only in such a connection from the point of view of trial, that it can explicitly come within purview. It is not an indifferent fact, in regard to a verdict on it, that the spread of suicide keeps pace, generally speaking, with the progress of civilisation, of our mechanical and intellectual mastery over nature's forces. It has increased in the last half-century with the immense impetus given to industries, commerce, and national education. During this period it has increased among the nations mainly affected by this impulse, and, among these, more among the German than the Romance nations, and among the latter more than among the Slavs. Within these nations it has increased at the centres of civilisation, in the great capitals, and within these latter among those who are chiefly engaged in callings where culture is highest. But we are warned to be cautious of hasty conclusions, since, in Norway, with advancing civilisation the number of suicides in the last century has greatly diminished. The warfare waged against alcohol may perhaps have some connection with this. The causes in individual cases are often obscure, but, so far as they are ascertainable, it would appear that temporary excitement of passion is provable in a decreasingly small number of cases; while in many cases disease is accountable; in the vast majority, probably more than two-thirds, the cause is weariness of life slowly coming to a head. But this itself has its reason in the ruin of the life by economical or business or spiritual or moral causes, and that in such inconceivably great variety and combinations of circumstances as to leave no possibility of being able to assess the measure of

personal guilt, and especially in those cases where the immediate causes are not such as drunkenness and dissipation, which are relatively plain and clear. Particularly shocking cases, as, for instance, youthful suicides, often cast light on the difficulty and necessity of plain speaking on the purely individual needs that arise in the spiritual, moral, and bodily development of the young life. In this task of the most personal care for souls love must always and ever be more ingenious in its faithfulness.

There is scarcely any point of ethics on which moral judgment has passed through so many and extraordinary alternations. The natural horror of death which characterises an unembarrassed mind, which does not willingly take this step into the dark unknown—man alone among the creatures of this world essays a voluntary death—was weakened at the commencement of complicated social arrangements by the tendency to excuse suicide, or even to glorify it, existing alongside this natural disapproval. The death of Saul seems much like the end of a course of disobedience, while it throws a sort of expiatory shimmer of light on a life which began with so much promise. The Stoic philosophy set the rule for that which appeared so grand in the end of Themistocles and Cato—if the circumstances seem unworthy, there is a way open; the life that can no longer be lived with dignity may be left like a room filled with smoke. The faith of Christians gave them reason and strength for stern disapproval. So completely did this view pass into the general consciousness that it seemed no longer needful to appeal to faith. The heroes of German philosophy almost overpassed the Christian judgment in strictness. In the opinion of Fichte, “to take one’s own life is just the same as determining no longer to do one’s duty; our duty to God, to our neighbour, to ourselves.” There were many causes which combined to bring about the breaking of the bow too stiffly bent. Medical science, which recognised the intimate dependence of the psychical on the physical life; still more the popularisation of its actual and supposed scientific results; the progress of social insight into the might of economic circumstances; moral considerations which would not submit to those master-sayings—considerations

which appeared to have sound human intelligence on their side. Why—it was asked always more insistently,—why not dare to take a life received unasked for? or that which is grown to be merely a burden and a torment to others as to oneself? Nay, is not the ruined man still a man by at least courageously putting an end to a life already lost? Is not such an end the opposite of the cowardice which these exalted axioms of philosophy would brand it as being? And from this prevalent feeling the sincere upholders of the stern view, and especially the Church, found the growing need of facing the question: Whether, where the last honours of burial are concerned, in such cases the poor and rich, the respectable and the pauper, are alike impartially dealt with?

In spite of all the confusion of the moment, the principles of Christianity on this matter cannot be doubtful. That word “Judge not,” set forth as an obvious rule for all, ought to make it clear to every Christian that there is no such thing as a ‘lost’ life so long as that “To-day if ye will hear His voice” (Heb. iii. 7) has meaning. The Christian knows that nothing can separate him from the love of God, and that in the light of this love everything without exception is for the best, even the suffering that is unendurable without this faith, and that for the sufferer himself, as for his own immediate circle (Rom. viii.); that he is the Lord’s, whether in life or death, and especially that he can die ‘to the Lord,’ in subjection to the will of the Lord, as to time and circumstances (Rom. xiv.). But we may go down a step further still into the labyrinth of the mind oppressed by sadness and weariness of life, and say, even where that living faith is not present at all, or is temporarily obscured, the common fear of God, the dread, however undefined, of that step into the unknown, that determination to pause before the final secret of our existence, may and ought to be a powerful obstacle to the carrying out of dark thoughts into darker deed. That is the meaning of the poet:

Oh that the Everlasting had not fixed  
His canon against self-slaughter. . . .

. . . . .



To die, to sleep,  
 To sleep, perchance to dream;—ay, there's the rub;  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
 Must give us pause.

But that the dread of something after death,  
 The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,

Many doctors affirm that one reason of suicide is the cessation of belief in a hereafter. In Christian judgment, accordingly, suicide is a guilty act when and so far as that definite faith or religious fear could be present, and on that only God can decide. But Christian history is full of examples of how this temptation to suicide more frequently tortures men than a merely superficial view recognises; and it is only known in confidential conversation how it is overcome by faith, and partly in ways that only those who are led in them can rightly declare to be marvellous.

#### *Asceticism.*

In the battle with temptation the Christian proves his weapons. He inquires for the means which will lead him on his course to the goal. Or then, if this goal is under our present point of view the ripening of Christian character, and the state of virtue, then he seeks for the means of realising it; for the virtues which are the means for the cultivation of his character. But if that is correct which has already been said of the development of the new life, then the doctrine of moral gymnastic (asceticism) may be shortly dealt with. It is at bottom merely a question of setting aside a doubtful notion, and one that is in ethics dangerous. We have long noted that, as said, we become good when we do good; the will grows firmer by practice on the material which divine Providence offers, by the fulfilling of God's will in a definite way. That is the secret not only of an active but also of a holy and, in both, peaceful life for Christ as for Christians (*cf.* Adolphe Monod, *Farewell Addresses*). "To walk in good works which God has prepared beforehand," that is the way

in which we ourselves become a personal whole, and do ourselves become a work of God (Eph. ii. 10): "We are His workmanship."

. . . . I

Am no tongue hero, no fine virtue-prattler.

I cannot warm by thinking. . . . .

Cease I to work, I am annihilated. (*Wallenstein*.)<sup>1</sup>

But that is our question, Is it not possible to 'warm the will' without being a 'virtue-prattler'? Is there no work that may be done merely for strengthening the will? Did not Jesus go alone on to the mountains and into the wilderness for prayer, for self-recollection? Such questions show in the briefest way possible that wholly distinct questions are mixed up and confused. Prayer, meditation, discipline of the emotional nature, all that we have long become acquainted with as important features of that image after which we have been formed and after which we are still to be fashioned, are our obvious task. But now the question is, are virtues attained in any other way than by being faithful to the task to be done, and by fulfilling every present duty, and so by prayer, meditation on God's word, "keeping under my body" (1 Cor. ix. 27), at the time, in the degree, and as our course in life and special position or individual calling (in the widest sense of this word, as previously defined) demands for this purpose? Or are there at least intervals in the Christian life which may be filled up by action, such as make no contribution to that great object; which do not help in any respect to realise the ideal even in the smallest point, even by adding some minor branches to the tree? Otherwise put, is there not action which has merely the purpose of fitting the will for future action, of increasing the quantity of the energy with which we may enter as trained combatants into the battle; action which, as it is phrased, aims at the attainment of virtue as such? It is a mere unimportant distinction, when those who answer these questions in the affirmative, with the usual expression, assert the right of asceticism, *i.e.* of the practice of virtue for practice' sake, or for

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's translation. —Tr.

the attainment of virtue, and employ this term asceticism sometimes of all possible means of virtue, positive and negative, or in other words such things as gymnastics and cathartic discipline, or bodily exercises and the practice of strict purity, or only use it of the latter of these. Those who take this latter accordingly do not generally quote all the passages of Scripture which speak of diligence, bodily exercise, avoidance of slackness, and the like, but only those which refer to self-restraint, self-renunciation, self-denial, the "plucking out of the right eye," the "taking up of the cross." Those who would include all possible means draw up in some detail—as far as the content is concerned—exceedingly attractive lists, in which they combine the points of view named (*i.e.* the ascetic, which is both practical and purifying, exercise and discipline) with a number of other items (such as our relation to God and one's own self, and the latter again contemplated from the side of the intelligence and the will) such as correspond well to the opulence of life's experience. In which, therefore, not merely such things as fasting and prayer and vows, but also travel, diaries, and the like, have their place as means of virtue. But all earnest Protestant moralists, however much they may differ in such artifices, are one in regarding such means of virtue merely as means, and not as laying full claim to the title of meritorious action (*cf.* p. 234).

But has an idea of this kind in general its proper place in Protestant ethics? We might hope that, when it is taken only and merely as just defined, this will be generally denied. Any example you like may serve to explain. In our time much is rightly said of temperance in the use of spirituous liquors. But the opinion that here we have a specially clear case, morally justifiable, for actual obligatory asceticism for us Protestants arises from want of clear knowledge. How far is this obligation to extend? By this self-control it is said our moral power for action in other provinces is exercised. Doubtless this is often the case. But as soon as we think of a definite person in a definite situation, then we see that this is undoubtedly only the case when such temperance is understood to be merely one item in the whole of our moral task. To this belongs, as we have repeatedly insisted, the profitable

subjection of all our natural impulses under the highest End; and here we need that sound common sense which, to use the words of St Paul, not merely struggles against the carnal desires of the flesh, but also avoids undue regardlessness of bodily needs. Now, the duty of self-control certainly, for the vast majority of persons, presents a wider range when they are ready to recognise this duty. But this is only so far as the question is one of individual duty. That is to say, according to all said earlier, so far as it is a duty necessary to the realisation of one side of the moral ideal that self-control has for the person practising it the result affirmed of steeling his energy for other different duties. It has not this result at all when it is a mere exercise of determination. How conceited and how small many of the heroes of temperance and abstinence show themselves by ignoring this simple truth! Nay, more than that, how unfit for practical action on the wide province of their whole life's task; in the most favourable case capable in this and that point, but not men of God "thoroughly furnished to every good work." The delusion thus opposed, that such practice of virtue for practice' sake is a high stage of moral attainment, arises from the fact that it is not always borne in mind how inseparable are the whole of the fundamental relations in the moral ideal, and particularly that relation of our own individuality to society. And if we, neglecting inward growth for this external morality, suddenly become aware, both for ourselves and for others, how hollow such morality is, because its roots are rotten, so conversely we overvalue the long-neglected work for a time, and give it an undue importance in an equally untrue way. Certainly so far as such work is done with earnestness, and further, in so far as it happens that personal morality first comes into existence in such effort, it would be wrong to undervalue such facts. Very often that motto is true of it: "Destroy it not, for there is a blessing in it." The true-hearted man is led on to something higher. This opinion as to the single case alters the principle in no wise. If we recognise the inseparable unity of moral gifts, then we see that no action is merely empty, but on the contrary *mere* self-discipline is so. Every



genuine effort of self-discipline is undertaken in the realisation of the whole of our moral task, in a determinate respect, and every such action is a practising oneself in virtue. At the bottom, opponents admit this when they, at the conclusion of their eulogy of ascetic exercises, do all they can to warn against self-righteousness, and exhort to trustful reliance on divine discipline, which, apparently so incidental, is in reality that which is alone consistently carried through. For, in fact, attempts to equip oneself for calls to act, with which we may most probably be met, are aimless when we remember the limit of our insight and the changeableness of our feelings. Salvation from this self-torment is to be found in the faith that it is God who prepares for us the works in which we are to employ ourselves, who determines, limits, furthers, and hinders our action, as well in reference to the formation of our own character as in reference to His great Kingdom, provided we will that His will may be done. On that account the dispute over ascetic practice is no mere learned debate, but it is important in this subject of the Christian life that this obscure and unsatisfactory notion should be dismissed. If the above-chosen example appears like trifling, it may still easily be shown that others bring us to the same results. What is the practice of prayer just for the sake of practice but a strange, even unchristian idea? The practice of prayer is a great factor in the Christian life, the right and duty of all the children of God, both (once more) different for every individual and for him in his individual experiences. Examples are, Luther during the Augsburg diet and in the sickness of Melancthon. The delusion that the practice of prayer for the sake of devotional exercise is good and praiseworthy again arises out of the fact that in the dissipating distractions of the world many do not seek or find the collectedness which is generally, and for them especially, necessary, without which they cannot be Christians at all, or fulfil their Christian calling; and many must have merely self-chosen 'Christian influences' brought to bear on them. So then it appears to them to be 'pious' if they arrange special devotional exercises. In truth, they must either so do the will of God in this or that measure,

in this or that way, or they think they sin. But we should say that surely in certain stages of development—for instance, in the special temptations of youth—single moral actions (*e.g.* temperance) might merely serve the purpose of testing the powers; then it can easily be shown that even these could not demonstrate their Protestant ethical character, even while they are capable of being regarded as individual calls of duty.

In short, there are no such things as especial means of virtue rightly understood, ascetic exercises in the accurately defined sense (p. 273). There is only the training of self by readiness to submit to the training of the great Teacher, and that by being ready to fulfil the one great life-task, in the way in which it is to be realised by a definite individual in a definite situation. To put it otherwise, there must be readiness to fulfil the ‘calling of life’ in the sense earlier defined. But this proposition will be still plainer if we consider some of the notions which are usually set forth as specially important examples of ascetical practice, such as vows, fasting, pious meditation, and prayer. But in what follows we use these subjects not merely as helps in our judgment on this subject of ascetical practice, but in order to avoid repetition we conjoin all that ought to be said generally of these important ideas in Protestant ethics.

#### *Vows.*

Vows occupy a special position. For vows can refer to all sorts of things—among other things, to fasting or prayer; and, again, not merely to such (nominal) ascetical practices, but, for instance, to one single heroic act. The speciality of a vow is the form of the action—that is, the person who takes a vow binds himself in a solemn way by a voluntary promise for the most part by calling God to witness. In this connection we do not deal with the question whether such confirmation by oath in the name of God beseems the Christian, but whether that solemn promising has any value in relation to the moral growth of the Christian, and for his progress in holiness. Even in the Old Testament the vow takes a far more modest position than in other religions. It finds place there, but is not really recommended. The emphasis lies on the point that a vow

once taken must be kept. And it is right not merely to call upon God in the time of need, but to thank Him afterwards for help afforded (*cf.* Ps. l. 14, 15, 23). Jesus neither mentions nor uses the vow. In the case of Acts xviii. 18 and xxi. 24 it is disputed whether in the former passage it was St Paul or Aquila who shaved his head, and in the latter it was those who accompanied him who had taken a vow on themselves. If it was St Paul himself, then the general proposition which we have in any case to derive from the main principles of Evangelical morality apply to him. They may be arranged as follows:—Firstly, a vow is in general immoral which has for its end an immoral purpose, such as the person who takes the vow would at his stage of knowledge recognise as such. The robber who sees the blameworthiness of his doings, but in spite of that proposes to ensure the divine blessing on his transaction by a vow, is not condemned by Christian morality only. Secondly, that vow also is unchristian which is undertaken for the purpose of obtaining from God some kind of help in a plan not in itself evil, which he supposes he would not gain without such offering. For in this there is an idea of God supposed which is different from the Christian conception, although this sort of heathenish notion of God has survived in Christianity in manifold ways. Thirdly, a promise to God in which we pledge ourselves to conduct not required of us and connect it with an offering, from the conviction that we are doing something specially acceptable to God, or are thereby attesting our gratitude and reverence, is not in harmony with Protestant ethics. Such ideas of a vow presuppose the Catholic idea of transcending duty, that is to say, of meritorious action, and therefore stand or fall with this Catholic conception of Christian ethics. It is obvious, in reference to these three types of vow, that they, if undertaken, are no longer binding the moment their unchristian or unevangelical character is recognised. Thus the Reformation conviction threw off monastic vows; nay, it is a duty to throw them off (Confession of Augsburg, Art. 27).<sup>1</sup> They are contrary to divine precept (*cf.* above). And now, fourthly, those vows are unevangelical

<sup>1</sup> *Sylloge Confessionum*, p. 219.—Tr.

which are yet only justifiable for reasons of personal self-discipline. Those vows are not in any way in themselves a sign of special moral earnestness, which some persons take on themselves (who are far from all those unchristian or unprotestant ideas), in order by their means to provide support for their weakness—to use, in fact, a crutch. For instance, he whose heart has often enough learnt its own ingratitude may find it a duty in some special situation (external or internal) to force himself to the expression of gratitude by a vow. Or when there is often proved weakness in reference to the use of intoxicants, taking the pledge becomes a matter of duty. Yet it lies in the nature of the thing that all vows of this kind must be temporary in their character, otherwise they encroach upon the providential guidance. Official vows or oaths of office are nearly related to these; related because they serve as a support to a weak will; distinct because they are expressive of readiness to undertake the task which belongs to a calling and not to an isolated piece of work, and because they are imposed from without by the state, or by some community, or the church. On this account their importance is in one aspect greater, and in another less. In any case much more should be done to secure their simplification and limitation. Doubly so in the case of the confirmation vow. In this case the ideal and the actual often stand in fearful contrast. Generally all vows, so far as Evangelical, as Luther grandly expresses it (*e.g.* in the Larger Catechism), are inclusively contained in the baptismal vow, which in reality is no ‘vow.’ The whole Christian life is its fulfilment, the daily “creeping to the font” (Luther); the faith which is ever new, never complete, that God desires to be to me a gracious God and Father, is the only enduring incentive, the one single motive power to love and to serve Him; and every individual vow is only justifiable when it is proved to be temporarily necessary for anyone from some special external or internal circumstance. Asceticism in the strict sense it is not; it is not ‘practice for practice’ sake, but that realisation of a part of his duty which is necessary for the individual, and only for him.

This latter remark is still clearer in reference to the above-mentioned other portions of ascetical practice, and above all



to fasting, *i.e.* the voluntary abstinence from food and drink, and from physical enjoyment in general. Simple as this definition of fasting as to its content is, it is difficult to speak of its value without misconception. It is rendered easier by excluding at once in this case too the idea of supererogatory and meritorious action. The preaching of fasting in the Old Testament by the prophets is directed against such idea, and not merely the testimony of Jesus Christ. After this preliminary statement a double sense of the term fasting may be distinguished. It is, for one thing, merely the expression of an inward state of mind. It is precisely this meaning which stands for the most part in the forefront in the Holy Scriptures. A heart bowed down like that of Hannah, a nation visited with defeat and famine, fasts; doubly so if pain and anxiety, connecting these visitations with sin, are felt, and if guilt burdens the conscience. The depression and humiliation will voluntarily express themselves by abstinence from physical enjoyments. But even in this respect the less demonstrative western peoples understand these outward tokens of grief. We may merely recall the painful impression which, for all refined sentiment, the shock of death or moral need calls forth, when in such circumstances importance is attached to eating and drinking. Fasting in this sense finds its plainest and purest expression in the word of the Lord, that the "friends of the bridegroom cannot fast so long as the bridegroom is with them," at the time when He is speaking of Himself and His disciples in contradistinction to the disciples of St John the Baptist (St Mark ii. 18 ff.); and in the saying inseparable from it, that His disciples when they fast "wash their faces and anoint their heads." This noble sense of fasting sets aside outward forms which are valuable only in a lower state of knowledge. The heart is directed to God alone. This as the really principal meaning of fasting has clearly nothing to do with any ascetical practice. It is impossible to practise this for practice' sake. It is the outward clothing of the inward experience. If the inward feeling is in a certain state, it is done spontaneously; and in any other case it is hypocrisy, an appearance answering to no reality. But fasting has not merely the sense thus spoken of even in the history of

Jesus Christ; another appears, namely, it is to answer the purpose of making the physical impulses servants to the moral life. Both purposes are often united, and the latter is wholly unimpeachable: as well when the training of the moral capacity is in question as when, in consequence of past neglect of discipline, a determinate special counteractive is desirable. The Augsburg Confession<sup>1</sup> has the first in contemplation (xxvi. 33) when it says that it is the duty of all by bodily exercise so to discipline themselves that excess should not give occasion to sin; and each should discipline his body so as to make it fit for, and not a hindrance to, each doing what his calling demands from him. Not in precepts of fasting but in such way does it recognise the place of fasting (1 Cor. ix. 27). The second is not less important. The temperance movement has its high value as such a counteractive. And it has this the more unquestionably the more it keeps at a distance from every idea of ascetical practice as 'practice for the sake of practice.' It is dutiful self-training for the realisation of an important part of the moral ideal, and that as completely individual. To put before the drunkard the notion of teetotalism as the whole of morality, or to wish to impose it on those who are in no danger, is and remains unevangelical. Also in this connection we expressly insist as above on the general proposition: so far as a temperance pledge is a question of the first earnest return to that which is good, perhaps at length definitely undertaken—a not infrequent occurrence where this matter of temperance is concerned—this overestimate of its importance in temperance missions is often more morally justifiable than the indifference of opponents. It is quite impossible to deny that the conscience of the community in its widest areas requires education in this question. How carefully suppressed the insight as to the services rendered by this movement to college life, to the nation, to the future! what rich sources of joy which have sprung up from the courageous fight against this consuming evil could be disclosed! It is merely a special application of the purpose of fasting just discussed when it is insisted on as

<sup>1</sup> "Quilibet Christianus etiam corporali disciplina, laboribus, . . . coercere carnem debet." Vide *Sylloge Confessionum*, p. III.—TR.

a preparation for prayer or some special religious work. It is by complete mastery over the sensual impulse that a state of preparation is attained. As instances may be mentioned the temptation of Jesus, the preparation for the first Mission (Acts xiii. 1 ff.), and the like. The conviction we have of the danger of self-deception, and how easy it is, and particularly what injury to the work to be attempted, instead of assistance in it, results from unwise fasting (for instance, the excitement of, rather than the victory over, sensual passions), has partially blunted for us in our day the more refined feeling of the actual gain of reasonable self-discipline, and of the discipline of others in this very respect.

*Prayer and Devotions.*

Prayer and devotional exercises are frequently treated of under this head of ascetical practice. The error of such a method is in this case plainer than in that of the subject of fasting. For whereas fasting is a discipline of our own nature, here a human being becomes absorbed in God's word and communes with God. If this subject is treated under this head, then the deepest and holiest which the 'new man' knows is brought down to the level of a mere means, and that only for the purpose of his own strengthening. Certainly prayer is in particular the richest and purest source of moral power. But as the most immediate expression of communion with God it is also the most direct participation in the highest Good, as so many devotional hymns attest. For it is in its innermost nature nothing else but living faith, the outward expression of trust and the desire to grow in faith. And that is generally true of all genuine devotion or of mental collectedness before God and in God, and is not merely true of prayer proper. Besides this we may call the hearing of God's word by the name meditation, and the response of the soul to that word we may call prayer. Only we must not forget that there is no prayer without giving heed to God's word, to His love in which He manifests Himself; and that inner listening is itself speaking with God. But on this assumption the distinction made is an aid to clearness. Prayer is the immediate intercourse of the whole personality with God; it is in the region of Christian knowledge that meditation perfects itself.

The value of meditation as a protection against the danger of distraction can scarcely be overestimated. This danger probably never pressed on any generation so much as on ours. For example, the press overwhelms us daily with a flood of the most contradictory and for the most part unimportant ideas, from which it is ever growing more difficult for the young to find the quiet needful for acquiring any fixed convictions. Christian contemplation is protected against the reproach of spiritual narrowness just because it has both the right and the power to draw everything that is of worth into its service. But it is not confined merely to Holy Scripture, but extended to all in which the Christian sees the working of God, in the history of the Church and of the world, as of the individual life, in art and nature, ever according to the gifts bestowed and the way in which each is led. In this matter there are sorts of religious meditation which use all legitimate material without constraint or artificiality, without becoming distracted by its variety; faithful in this to the great type of that incomparable book of devotion, the Bible. For in fact the Scripture remains for all such devotional occupation of the mind as well its supreme standard as its greatest subject, and without this book devotion is indefinite and confused, emotional and unsound. It is wanting in backbone. The desire to train Christian character cannot be satisfied if the value of Bible Christianity does not gain more recognition—such character, that is, as grows out of devotional occupation of the mind with the Holy Scriptures. We are in the midst of the great battle about the Bible, which does not merely occupy the theologian, but has laid hold of the very roots of the Churches' life. But even in the midst of the battle we may say, the attack of human learning on the Bible, of which it itself knows nothing, and on the other hand the insight which is awakened that it must prove by its contents that it is for the believer the word of God, may contribute much to the furtherance of that devotional occupancy with it, and bring to those who love the truth the desire and the love of busying themselves with it untroubled about the opinions of friends or foes. Luther's saying is on this point true for everyone: "I ought to so regard the word of God that if God says



something I should ask whether that does not mean me. Hence, brother, if you wish to compel me by God's word, then give me a text which touches me; otherwise I give no heed to it." And in such meditation on the divine word, by a necessary reflex influence, that attitude to the Holy Scripture which is alone justifiable in the Evangelical Church is ever becoming more clearly known, and ever better grounded, of which we spoke earlier (pp. 116 ff.). Here we are only concerned with the fruit of Bible reading by learned and unlearned for the furtherance of Christian character. Under completely changed conditions, with an embarrassing plenitude of spiritual nourishment, in the midst of the haste of modern life the Holy Scriptures, divested of the halo of sanctity, will anew and in a fresh way become the home of the personal spiritual life; unity in variety; a resting-point amid useless motion; a motive force for tasks which cannot otherwise be accomplished. The power of the word of God to shape character we often perceive with astonishment in the markedly high character of many so-called uneducated persons. In the confidential letters of our great statesmen it has unexpectedly been made even plainer. It will prove itself the only cure for that so-called culture which imagines that there is a culture which does not produce an independent personality. It is in this that there lies at the same time the sufficient pledge that such meditation is not mere contemplation which unfits for active life. The mere contemplative existence is condemned, root and branch, by this guide, the Holy Scripture, on which we rely for the purifying and nourishing of the spiritual life within.

God's word, in which we become devotionally absorbed wherever and however it greets us, demands our response. This response is prayer, the intercourse of the heart with God. Disclosing Himself to us, He desires that we should open our hearts to Him. His return to us induces our return to Him; a real intercourse is set up. Not as if every single prayer must grow up out of a fully conscious absorption of ourselves in the divine revelation; even the cry of the long-estranged heart may be prayer. But this were not possible if we could not somehow lay hold on God's efficacious though often unacknowledged

power and goodness. As all Christian life, rightly understood, is faith, so also must truly Christian prayer be; and prayer is the most direct and the most spiritually essential utterance of faith. For this reason it has been often compared to breathing: "We breathe because we cannot help doing so, and this is the very reason why we wish to breathe and must breathe." That is true in fact of the freely necessary breathing of the soul in the air of eternity, of prayer. It is true of prayer because it is true of faith, because faith is the incomparable giving of ourselves to God, and the willingness to receive God's gifts; the marvellous experience of possessing and seeking to possess at the same time; of attaining the goal, and yet never by complete realisation. But now, inasmuch as Christian faith reposes wholly on the nearness of God in Christ, and has this as its special stamp, so also is it with prayer. It is prayer in the name of Jesus (St Matt. xxviii. 29; St John xvi. 23). Whatever may be the meaning of these words as to their original signification, all the interpretations are right in substance because they are mutually complementary—the utterance of the name of Jesus; by the command of Jesus; in the stead of Jesus; in faith in Him; according to His mind—both as regards the content of the prayer and the inner state of the suppliant. One of these is impossible without the other. The name of Jesus is the ground and the power of Christian prayer, and determines its form and content. Here especially form and content are of importance. In regard to form, it is prayer in the faith which lives in the prayers of Jesus Himself, in confidence and humbleness, its look directed to the Father who 'freely gives'; the Father in heaven who gives from pure grace, who will be 'entreated of' but not compelled. By this too its content is shaped—the final, great object of such believing prayer 'in accordance with the mind of Jesus' cannot be other than God Himself. All the questions about prayer put by the Christian man are in principle answered by that word, 'in accordance with the mind of Jesus,' such as how thanksgiving and intercession are related in prayer; how prayer ought to pass into intercession; how all single petitions find their right place in the model prayer. It is only another mode

of expressing the same fact when we say the Lord's Prayer is a model for all Christian prayer. For He who gave it is the foundation of our confidence when we appropriate this prayer to ourselves, and it has this stamp upon it; no one can pray more heartily and reverently than in its use. The Prayer embraces adoration and thanksgiving, or, if we leave out the doxology at the end, adoration is at any rate the dominant note, as found in the opening words. Prayer for ourselves is united with prayer for others at the beginning, 'Our Father.' 'Our daily bread' is in the middle separate from those great prayers which make God's business ours, and our highest interest. The care of God who 'forgives' keeps us and delivers us from evil. Thus we understand, since prayer is faith, and the 'Our Father' teaches us to pray in the name of Jesus, what Luther means when he says, "Faith is a perpetual 'Our Father.'"

There are two points to which we may explicitly refer. One concerns the fourth petition. It is our warrant for bringing our earthly cares to God. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would not be the omnipotent God of heaven and the earth; the world in which He has put us, not God's world, if our petitions may refer to the eternal and not also to the temporal. For both are inextricably bound together so long as a Christian is here in the stage of growth; and consequently it is not in keeping with the living trust of a child in his Father if that trust may not express itself in prayer for deliverance in the time of need, and for the bestowment of earthly gifts; so long as this earthly sorrow and earthly joy are, in His view, inseparable from that final end of all prayer, that God may be our God. It is this end that determines the value of those means, and it is here that the prayer for 'bread' 'daily,' 'to-day' comes in. This position of the fourth petition points to this idea of 'value.' The name of God, the Kingdom and the Will of God, are for the Christian in the midst of the earthly battle not what they ought to be and will be if he is not allowed to pray for his daily bread. But when he has made this prayer, then the three last petitions, which are, in fact, the most important, are the most important for him.

Unless anxiety about earthly good is removed, no man can, without self-deception, seek 'first of all the Kingdom of God and His righteousness' (p. 191). The fourth petition is only an application of the great principle that it is only he who has been 'made rich' who is loved with 'an everlasting love,' who can do God's will with entire earnestness. In each single case of earthly necessity he ought, by believing prayer, to manifest the assurance of his faith. But it must be the prayer of faith.

If the transitory usurps the place of the permanent and takes the first place in our endeavour, then our prayer for earthly goods becomes mere conjuring with words, leads us away from God, instead of closer to God, even though it assumes the appearance of the most heroic devoutness. The word 'in the Name of Jesus' is of especial importance in reference to the fourth petition. In no other prayer is the Father so confidently besought for all that is needful; in no other is there such humble deference to the Father to vouchsafe to hear so that His will may be done. It is for this reason that it is precisely in this case that no external limits can be named up to which prayers for earthly good are justifiable as far as their content is concerned. Each one has, in the exercise of faith in each case, to make clear to himself what those limits are. They may be drawn widely or narrowly in faith or unfaith. Doubtless our outlook in prayer ought to be widened, and then our own personal needs will not loom so large; but they do not, on that account, cease to be subjects for prayer. The same thing is true of the manner in which we pray for earthly good. Very closely connected with this manner of prayer is the imminent danger of 'stormy' prayer, and yet the intermission of repeated and importunate prayer may arise from a reprehensible want of confidence in God. It is true that often enough the earthly-minded heart may be led by prayer to cease petitioning for some one thing, and that by prayer confidence in prayer may be increased. There especially law and compulsion find no ruling place, but trust, and trust of the kind that is not mere imagination, but such as will confess its want of steadfastness to Him who is "greater than our heart and knows all things," who will strengthen our trust. The riches and the freedom of



our faith grow in clearness in this its sanctuary, and that phrase is a correct one which speaks of a 'world of prayer.'

### *Intercession.*

A further question often occupies Christian reflection, when speaking of petition, and that is how far intercession ought to go. The answer to this question is also in the 'Our Father.' The interests of the children of the heavenly Father are more personal than anything else, while at the same time they have interests in common with others wider than anything else. 'Our' and 'us' instead of the natural 'my' and 'me' is for the Christian a really natural utterance. This faith in the Father cannot exist without love to the brethren, both to those who really are so and to those who may presently become so. And his love, because it lives in faith, necessarily expresses itself in believing prayer also for others, and that, as 1 Tim. ii. 1 explicitly affirms, prayer of every sort, as supplication, thanksgiving, petition. Thus St Paul has the churches 'in his heart' (Phil. i. 7); every heart-beat, every breath is for them. Love would not be Christian love if it were not true of it, 'I am responsible in God's sight for my love.' When intercessory prayer is taken in this obvious way, the objection need not arise—however much to each person the battle of faith is ordained to be and ought to be his own personal concern—that intercession is an interference with our neighbours' freedom and with God's arrangements. The Christian idea of the Kingdom of God, which it is the purpose of its Creator and Builder to build by earthly means, transcends these objections. The task of each co-worker with God (1 Cor. iii. 2) is to be faithful in the exercise of his influence on others outside, and in his intercession as the motive power of his work for them. And both are done in humility (*cf.* p. 262). Livingstone, ready for any sacrifice, prayed: "Wilt thou vouchsafe to me to make intercession for Africa?" (*cf.* Gen. xviii.). That doubt besides may rise quite apart from the question of intercession—Who can at all measure the influence of one person on another? And who can deny the diversity of the divine gifts in the temporal development of His Kingdom? Is it consequently

necessary to deny the freedom of man or the righteousness of God?

It may be merely mentioned in passing how in the Lord's prayer other subordinate as well as these primary questions in regard to the life of prayer find their answer. He who in his praying will be taught by the 'Our Father' the manner and content of his prayer will gain the Christian sensibility required for 'praying without ceasing' (St Luke xviii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 17); and uniting this with the claims of special prayer just in the way both are needful for him, and both in the right proportion, such as is only possible for one trained by the Lord's Prayer, and whose Christian character has grown in this training. 'Praying always with all prayer' assumes that all prayer is in its final reason directed to one great object in the way that is fitting, that is, that it is wholly and fully the act of the living faith, which has its being in the revelation of the divine will. Such a faith as this impels to conscious intercourse with God in proportion as this revelation has a vivid hold of the outward and inward life. It is this that makes the soul fit for the reception of those blessings which come from special times of prayer, without which these may easily degenerate into formality. In the same way the thankful employment of special forms of prayer becomes merely the way to freedom in spontaneous prayer which comes from the heart; and in this way the use of human words is no hindrance to the 'unutterable groaning,' the assistance of the divine Spirit in our weakness.

To speak of answers to prayer is clearly a subject for doctrinal treatment, and especially apologetics—that is to say, so far as it concerns justification of the idea against doubts—and relates to the question of Christian faith in God. But, on the other hand, it is the Christian life that makes it clear what the hearing of prayer means. Our communion with God is so vivid a reality, in faith, and in the prayer of faith, that the supposition that it is a mere means of self-contentment and self-encouragement, self-exaltation, and self-absorption, is at once shut out. And this is so with the above-given closer definitions, in the sphere of the outward as of the inner life. Those objections too are excluded which arise from the idea held by some who are un-

convinced of the power of prayer, of a logical necessity joining all things, which is not more important in regard to the outward than to the inward life, for all phenomena in both spheres are just as much or as little related to the idea of absolute necessity. That does take place which would not happen in the absence of prayer. But in Christian ethics, in the connected consideration of the Christian life, it is also quite clear that the divine answers to prayer are never evoked by human prayer save as those answers spring from the present willingness of God. His eternal love, which is under no natural necessity, discloses itself to that trustful faith which seeks to become a partaker in that love. God's will is pure goodness quite apart from our prayer. It is our prayer that makes us capable not merely of understanding the whole 'riches of His goodness,' but also of desiring, in the strict sense, that God would give, and believing that He is able to give, because He desires to give, since He is love. In this connection two questions emerge for the believer in particular, which are not often discussed in the measure that the experiences of life seem to require; and these concern prayer when faith is wavering, and the right and duty to hold firmly the possibility of answer to our own prayers.

The first question is indeed a burning one in respect to the origin and development of a life of prayerfulness. It has received much attention; as, for instance, A. H. Francke has forcibly discussed it. But it is of special importance at present in the battle with 'the modern consciousness.' Perhaps our answer—so far as it is possible to give a general one, and is not a question for which each one must now and again seek his own solution—lies in the connection of prayer with faith. We have seen that it springs out of faith and leads on to fuller faith. Now, the first part of this truth seems to exclude the prayer of the doubter. Often enough do we hear, 'I cannot pray, for I cannot believe.' But prayer without faith is degrading it to a mere throw of the dice which forbids the possibility of reverence, perhaps of the last remains of such reverence; and it leads into the danger of self-deception, and to a kind of self-hypnotisation which shuts out self-respect. But the conclusion that, where there is a deficiency of faith, prayer is

altogether impious and unworthy is still too hasty; because the correct assumption that prayer grows out of faith is easily left too much undefined. Surely it never grows out of an absolutely perfect confidence; otherwise it could never have the purpose of strengthening it. Nevertheless, there is an undeniably strong difference between a faith that is still incomplete, and doubt. But, on the other hand, is the doubt on the part of him who would willingly pray so decided, so certain of itself, that he for his part must give up prayer altogether? In that case it would no longer be the doubt of the seeker, but a decision against God. More particularly, in accordance with Christian conviction, there is no life in which there are no traces of the divine inworking, and hence none without traces of faith. It is this imperfect faith that the seeker may and ought to use. But still more important, and probably more convincing to an anxious mind, is that other portion of our statement about prayer, namely, it is the desire to come closer to God; it is the wish to grow in faith. Of prayer it is true that it is not only 'from' but also 'to' faith. Now, this desire for God even in strong doubt, in the midst of the great uncertainty of our own consciousness, can be very vivid and sincere. Then in God's judgment it is very possibly a sufficient substitute for the faith in which he who prays finds himself deficient. This is especially so if he has true readiness to do the will of God in real earnest (St John vii. 17). Nor must the idiosyncrasy of each person be forgotten, just as in the complexity of conditions it is not seldom the case that want of physical health is the origin of that self-torment over deficient faith which then demands other than ethical treatment. Finally, it is worth remarking that in a period which is not religious in its tendency, subjected to the overmastering influence of sense-experiences, many strange thoughts find expression on the character of religious certainty, as on the way in which we gain our knowledge of God—as if it must be such a certainty as excludes any doubt on the part of any sane man. A deeper penetration recognises that those ideas are of that kind which contradict the nature of religious faith, and such as would make it impossible.

Among the ethical means for the cure of that doubt



gratitude for answered prayer occupies a high place; for gratitude is the great secret of progress in the whole province of the Christian life. In this way we are led to the other question above mentioned: Is it the right and duty of faith thankfully and firmly to hold fast to the idea of answered prayer? In any case thankfulness ought to go far beyond all prayer, and experiences of special answers to prayer. There is scarcely any apostolic exhortation so insistent as that of being in all things thankful. But in that it is not excluded but included that we ought to be thankful for the answer to any prayer. Every prayer, as Luther says, concludes with "the amen of thankfulness." It is, however, never vain, however God may hear our prayer, whether granting or denying, because God gives us better than that. But even in the case of a special answer childlike confidence is the soul of gratitude. Neither a poor faith that in the absence of prayer this or that would not have been done, nor a restraint of special thanksgiving when a special providence forces itself on the attention, is Christian. To restrain gratitude is at one time as impious and disastrous to the increase of faith as it is to force it at another time. "God is greater than our heart" also in this that He seeks nothing but sincere faith, and not laboured prayer or gratitude.

By this review of this grand peculiarity of the Christian character, its life in the world of prayer, we understand how profound is that often-used answer to the question: How ought we to pray? "Reverently, as in God's presence, penitently, humbly, in true faith, in the Name of Jesus." At bottom these ideas are pure implicates and not at all mere assertion of the manner of prayer, but of the type of Christian character; and indeed, as the word 'penitently' explicitly reminds us, of the Christian in his battle with sin.

#### *Sin in the Christian.*

But we have still to speak of *the issue of this battle*, or, in other words, of sin in the regenerate and of the assurance of salvation, in spite of sin, and it is at this point that the idea of Christian perfection becomes clear.

The New Testament is full of testimonies to the fact in the Christian life that the battle with sin is by no means always a victorious one. It exhorts with much earnestness, to become "dead to sin," not to "let sin reign in your mortal bodies," to be "planted into the new life," to "seek what is above," so that we vividly realise that such exhortations do not refer to a remote possibility of sinning on the part of the Christian, but a dangerous reality. We do, however, no longer refer that expression of the Apostle of his being "sold under sin" (Rom. vii. 7 ff.) to St Paul the Christian. St Paul the Christian knows that he is "no longer the servant of sin," but freed from it. But the reason which made the Reformers and numerous others inclined to this interpretation we fully recognise as the truth which St Paul himself impressively bears witness to in other places (Gal. v. 16 ff.), that even in the Christian, nay, particularly in the Christian, there exists a severe struggle between flesh and spirit. With a wholly special design are the ideas of 'sinning no longer' and 'sinning' placed in juxtaposition in the first Epistle of St John. He who affirms that he has fellowship with God and sins is a liar; he too is a liar who says "he has no sin" (1 John i. 8 ff., iii. 1 ff.). The apparent contradiction is merely the whole truth. A 'new man' really exists, a good tree has been planted. But because it is a question of a 'new man,' and the metaphor of a tree, however excellent, is a mere metaphor; because the new man does not like a plant grow according to natural laws, but as a personality, by a personal trust reposed in the personal God, in ever fresh states of the will, it follows that the old life of sin has its influences still, and must be overcome in daily conflict and by a complete overthrow. Nay, it is precisely the really renewed man who completely recognises how much there is of the 'old man,' of the ungodly, still left in him which must be given over to death; and especially the best are often the deepest tainted with evil. So we comprehend the word in the Catechism that "we daily offend often." By this Luther hits the meaning of the Gospel, although it is certain that in the New Testament, especially in St Paul's writings, the emphasis naturally lies on the consideration of the 'new man,'

the creation of divine grace, in accordance with his experience in missionary work.

It is but consistent when the Romish Church judges differently of sin. Because it does not recognise any truly personal relation to God at all, in the sense earlier given, it consequently knows no 'new man' in the sense of a radically new personality, no Christian moral character, so much does it at once overestimate and underestimate—now one and now the other—the sin of the Christian. It has on the one side spotless sainthood, yea, sainthood with superabundant merits; and regards evil desire in itself as no sin, artfully disguising the contradiction of St Paul (fifth session of Tridentine Council). On the other hand, it teaches that the grace of justification is lost by mortal sin, and must be reinstated by means of the sacrament of penance; and though it includes every possible 'mortal sin,' and demands from all, even its 'saints,' approach to the sacrament of penance, this holiness appears to us to be a very doubtful quantity. The reason of both propositions—which appear to us to be mutually contradictory—shows that they are not concerned with personal renewal, as we Protestants understand the word personal. Conversely, for the same reason our teaching on sin in Christian men must produce the impression on Romanists that we sometimes take sin too lightly, and at another time too seriously. The contrast of the two views becomes explicitly clear in the dispute on the question whether faith can exist where there is mortal sin. We negative the question. For us in the strict sense there is only one mortal sin which shuts out from salvation, and that is unbelief, because for us faith means a personal trust in God's personal grace. So long as this faith lives in the heart, it has a part in the life which consists in fellowship with God, whatever the danger to which it is subject, and however urgently necessary earnest repentance (in the Gospel sense of the word) may be. We really do take sin not less earnestly than our opponents, but more seriously. (On the question whether this loss of faith is possible, and whether there are circumstances in which it is recoverable, see below.) The Romanists answer in the affirmative, because for them faith is a belief of the creeds; con-

sequently, clearly sin may coexist with it, such as is regarded as heinous enough to require penance in which the forfeited grace of God is restored, and of course lasts until it is lost by the next mortal sin. The idea of unified will, of moral character which has its basis in the gracious will of God, is not duly recognised. Consequently by 'state of grace' they understand something different from ourselves.

There is one more opponent of our Protestant teaching of sin deserving of attention, and that is the fanatical theologian. The enthusiasts of the Reformation period maintained even then the sinlessness of true Christians. And in the present day we have it here loudly proclaimed, and at least as a passing phase, the eager cry—The Protestant Evangelical Church has no appreciation of the fact of a present and full salvation through Christ. Sanctification, say they, is a gift as well as justification which it is possible to receive instantaneously by faith. Occasionally such opinions are variously expressed. The Christian is sinful, but he commits no sins. There is such a thing as sinless perfection here on earth, and so forth. We seek in vain for clear definition of the idea. A complete gift of holiness—if by this is meant something new and special such as is not contained in the great master-truth of the Gospel that faith in God's forgiving grace in Christ is the motive force and incentive to the new moral life, to good action—is something unintelligible. It ignores the nature of the will. The divinely ordered distinction between way and end, faith and sight, is wiped out. The negative word sinlessness easily leads to a negative and ascetical idea of the Good; and when to avoid open contradiction to explicit statements of the New Testament it is said that sin is a single, fully conscious, and designed breach of a divine commandment, then the kind of freedom from sin thus indicated is a very trifling claim which may do nothing else but weaken the earnestness of the Christian conflict with sin. We are involuntarily reminded of the Roman view. Of course it also is indubitable :—those warnings are intelligible and justifiable according to circumstances, as against inconsiderate misuse of the doctrine of grace. However, it does



not mean a deeper acquaintance with the Gospel, but a falling off from the ideal of our Church (p. 187).

But can the sin of the regenerate man issue in the irrecoverable loss of a state of grace? or, more closely, can a mortal sin, in the Gospel sense, result in a fall from grace generally? Is it irrevocable, and such as actually ends in eternal death? Strictly speaking, both these two questions arise; but they are clearly connected with one another, so that they can only be affirmed or denied together. Whoever denies the first does implicitly deny the second; whoever affirms it will find himself inclined to the affirmation of the second. The Protestant Churches have judged variously on these questions, the Reformed denying, the Lutheran affirming. Not merely single passages (like Heb. vi. 4 ff., x. 26 ff.) which Luther himself stumbled at as "hard knots," or 1 John v. 17, are in favour of the Lutheran view, but also the whole New Testament conception of the Christian life. However strong those metaphors taken from nature are which are employed for illustration, still the New Testament never regards the new life as a higher natural life, but as to be understood ethically. It is possible to be ever so enthusiastic and profound in speaking of moral necessity; provided this necessity must be 'moral,' then it is not a natural necessity, and to assert the impossibility of a fall from grace is wrong. Without the contrary possibility that summons, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii. 12), has no clear meaning. The Apostle uses in relation to himself the expression "if I may apprehend," "if I might attain" (Phil. iii. 12). The objection that such a fall is inconceivable, because it is the denial of the clearly recognised possession of salvation, fails to appreciate the mysterious depths of the inner life in which knowledge and will generally appear in contrast. But of course the final answer rests with the judgment of God and not that of our fellow-men where responsibility is concerned; and "God is greater than our heart" (1 John iii. 20). This is doubly true when that idea of a possible fall is clothed in the words which have often proved the source of gloomy self-torment—the sin against the Holy Ghost. The application of the saying (St Matt. xii. 31) which in the first instance refers to

those still unregenerate, to those in a state of grace is according to the other above-cited passages and on general grounds unobjectionable. Only in that case the utterance must be understood in the sense above defined. Then, without in any way depreciating the seriousness of the Gospel, the danger of misuse is obviated. This misuse is connected with the fact that it is precisely in such a point that it is difficult to recognise the limits of mental soundness, as, for instance, in the historically famous examples of a Francesco Spiera<sup>1</sup> and others.

### *Assurance of Salvation.*

But how may assurance of salvation be said to be consistent with sin in Christians? Assuming that the assurance of salvation is not a mere empty expression, it is a present experience of blessedness and a certain hope of blessedness, and is present blessedness in fellowship with God the only good, whose blessedness flows from His own eternal life, in which no one can share unless he shares in His goodness, in His love (*cf.* p. 182). But how weak is the faith in which we experience God's love, how poor our love to God and to our neighbour which grows from this faith! But, nevertheless, are we to say that there is assurance of salvation? It is here, in this very context, in which we can appraise the difficulty of this thought, that it is proper to bring the matter to a definite conclusion, having used it as a leading idea without always mentioning the phrase itself.

The Evangelical Protestant Church makes its highest boast that in it the doctrine of assurance is preached and experienced. With full justification; only we must be on our guard against the loss of this our superiority, and of regarding what the Romish Church offers to its members as valueless. For, if assurance becomes for us a mere expression, then that Church would have more than we, namely, the continual readiness to provide the means to impel to good works by its arrangements,

<sup>1</sup> A case similar to that of Archbishop Cranmer in English history. After becoming a Protestant in 1542, Spiera recanted under pressure in 1547. He died in despair, believing that he had thereby committed the unpardonable sin. He was a barrister near Padua.—TR.

particularly its sacraments. For the Catholic that is his trust, and the spur to his soul's yearning for heaven. It is repose and earnestness so closely united that we understand how a pious Catholic, in the presence of a Protestant who is certain of his salvation, may feel distressed because to him this assurance of salvation seems merely an empty phantasy. But yet only in the presence of a Protestant who had the word only without the thing. This is really our jewel. It is only through it that we become persons, independent men in free obedience. It is only from the assurance of salvation that we can do good works such as deserve the name. On this we have said enough. But on this account the question above mentioned is a burning one—How is it possible to reconcile the sin of the regenerate with his assurance of salvation? The answer is found in all that has been already said in the foundation of the new life. It does not depend on what we do, or partly on God, partly on ourselves, but purely on God's free love, on the fact that He bestows on us His personal favour. Therefore also our assurance of salvation is not based on our doing, but on trust in God's love. But God's love really creates in us a new life. To trust in that love is the new life, and this life is blessedness. Or, to say the same thing in other words—we know nothing of 'empty' faith. Faith is to us the most effectual and effectuating reality. But its basis is God's love and God's love in Christ alone. Hence the sole ground of the assurance of salvation is this love of God, Christ Himself. This basis is not destroyed by sin, but through it only made clearer to the mind. Again, the same thought may find expression in this way: since we are aware of our personal fellowship with the personal God, this, so long as it is present, soars high over our single and continually repented sins, which would disturb that assurance of salvation. In the state of grace forgiveness is ever present even along with our offences (Schleiermacher; *cf.* Luther's Short Catechism).

By reason of this assurance of salvation the right answer to the question is at once given as to how this assurance of salvation is experienced. If it is a genuine experience and not a mere idea, if it is to be regarded as a true idea, stamped with

its value, and firmly maintained, then plainly the answer can only be—it is experienced in all the manifestations of the new life, realisable by us in sincere reverence, and humble confidence in God, especially in that proof of it, childlike prayer, and in love of our neighbour maintaining itself in the faithful performance of the duties of our calling. And that not by the exclusion but with the inclusion of all the fluctuations arising from the conflict with sin. Even in the life of St Paul the triumphant, “For I am persuaded” (Rom. viii. 38) changes to the less jubilant “We rejoice also” in the confession of tribulations, of inner need and struggling weakness. But this struggling is itself a witness of the new life, and brings the ever new victory of an assured faith, which in very deed would not be faith if it possessed the certitude of an external fact. If bodily health is not merely the experience of every particular pleasurable feeling, but consists in the activity of the powers, so in the kingdom of the Holy Spirit and of freedom, with all the differences involved, is the new life of the Christian. There is here no danger that in this way the Christian’s gaze is directed self-wards and his new life made the foundation of his confidence, that is, a foundation which is a continually shifting one. For, as we again observe, he knows what the firm foundation of this new life really is. But if this life does not show itself active, it is not really present. No wish that this obvious truth were otherwise will clear it away. For it is impossible to imagine a greater contradiction than to suppose that the living God interests Himself in a man, and yet it continues to be the same with him as before; or, regarded from the other side, that a man can believe in God’s grace and not the least alteration of his emotional life take place. Even among weak men that kind of fellowship would scarcely be regarded as worthy of the name.

But is not this answer too simple and in the end unsatisfying so far as anxiety about assurance of salvation comes to us in all forms? There is an abundance of instructions and of specifics for this anxiety. If we consider them, the solution above given will become clearer. Some of these are recommended by the Evangelical Churches themselves; others more by different



pious societies in the Church. To the former belongs the emphatic reference to baptism or confession or communion; and beside this the advice to lay fast hold of the promise of salvation, to impress it on the mind, to grasp it with the will, to rest on it in feeling, or by vividly pressing the conclusion: Christ died for all who believe; I believe, therefore, He died for me also. In the second class of methods of becoming assured of salvation, which, used by individuals, secured recognition amongst followers in these communions, and from thence spread more widely in the Protestant Churches generally, there belongs the high estimate which some attach to deep exhibitions of penitence, ending in an overflowing emotion of pardoning grace. Another is the instruction to vividly realise in the mind the image of the Crucified. Another is the counsel to become assured of salvation from every sign of an earnest Christian walk, especially self-denial of worldly enjoyment. The three last-mentioned ways to this desired end cannot, of course, rightly be connected without further explanation with the names of A. H. Francke, Zinzendorf, Spener, but represent rather the views of their followers.

Perhaps we might arrive more easily at unanimity, so far as the subject-matter allows, if it were openly acknowledged by the opposers of these particular methods that they all are right, so far as they stand opposed to the widespread indifference on the question of assurance of salvation, which nevertheless, properly understood, ought to be the Christian's chiefest care. If this were acknowledged on one side, then it would be easier for others to examine whether these methods always pursue the right path, and whether they attain the end. The first must be doubtful to everyone who has a clear idea of the nature of grace and of faith, as we Protestants understand these things. Then we see that assurance of salvation cannot always be present in equal strength of feeling. We have already reminded ourselves that invariability of pleasurable feeling is not a proof of bodily health; specially long and lasting feelings of pleasure are on the contrary frequently signs of an approaching sickness. And those higher relations of mutual confidence among men, between mother and son, friend and friend, do

not show such invariability. Of course there are festivals of love, in which we have a clear consciousness and enthusiastic appreciation of the sunlight which both illumines and warms us; but the value of such occasions is tested in our everyday sober tasks. People do not say much about their love. Its certitude is only in the quiet, strong keynote of the life stirred, tempted, tried. It is none otherwise in the Christian life with the assurance of salvation. What the New Testament says of flesh and spirit and the 'piercing' power of the Word (Heb. iv. 2) has its special meaning in this connection. But the methods recommended do not securely lead to the goal, always supposing that we have rightly defined it. For a heart which is agitated by such doubts is ingenious in knowing how to produce a new doubt about the means thus lauded—for instance, a doubt of the conclusion from the general promises of grace. The person concerned may raise continually fresh doubts whether he has the faith required. Then for him the conclusion is invalid. Or, he may fancy that he has this faith without possessing it. Then he deludes himself. Further, the recollection of his specially deep penitential emotion may become dim, or a doubt may rise as to its earnestness and depth. Zinzendorf himself, on his own testimony, was not always alike fit for his meditation on the wounds of Christ. To resolve to found an assurance of salvation on certain pious exercises, or self-denials, has already led many to spiritual pride, and in the end destroyed all assurance. But the whole of these methods separate the subjective from its objective ground, *i.e.* the grace of God in Christ, and so ascribe to faith what it, by itself alone, cannot accomplish.

Thus we are driven back on the statement previously advanced, that the assurance of salvation is experienced in the various manifestations of the new life. But when this statement is admitted we may without any ambiguity allow, may even rejoice, that each of those single answers to the question, 'How can I be sure of my salvation?' contains a part of the truth to which value may be attributed by each according to his own especial need. Just as, in the case of some disturbance of the bodily health, the anxiety which this occasions is relieved

by occupancy with some energetic work, so may the direction of the attention of the anxious Christian to some special confirmation of his true Christian character serve to show him to whom he really belongs, spite of doubt. Still more important are those methods which vividly realise the final ground and anchoring place of all saving faith, God's grace in Christ. It would be both petty and untrue to deny that they have all proved valuable. But it would be just as petty and untrue if we were to wish to give more prominence to one above the other, and if we were not willing to range them all equally under the great main principle. The riches of the divine wisdom are as inexhaustible here as in conversion. Of clear and especial value is that question of Luther's, "Have you not then been baptised?"—exactly in Luther's sense, for whom assurance was nothing but the express reference to the sole ground of all certainty of salvation; for whom consequently it could not be separated from vital, real, but never wholly perfect faith, so that there is no longer need to speak of a special means of assurance. It would be a profitable task to point out how the whole exposition of the question, so far as it has wandered into aimless ways, is simply founded on the want of comprehension of the true Evangelical idea of faith. The mistake arises from speaking of a general faith such as obviously carries with it no assurance of salvation, because it is not 'faith' in the full sense; and on that account is supposed to be in need of all sorts of completions, confirmations, assurances, etc.

From this point it is finally clear, too, what importance the growth of the new life—the manifestation of Christian character in useful work—has for its future perfection; or, in the old formula, how 'good works and eternal salvation' are connected. The formulas by which the last of the Lutheran confessional writings sought to smooth the strife on this question are clearer in their design than satisfactory in their content. The statement (which some considered could alone guarantee the truth of justification by faith alone) that good works are a hindrance to salvation was rejected, as was the opposite proposition, which others considered the only safeguard of the true Gospel

against abuse, namely, that good works are essential to salvation. But their negations were more definite than their affirmations as to what the right doctrine is. The statements deemed sufficient were that not merely on the point of justification but also on that of salvation good works are excluded, but they follow necessarily from faith, and they are proofs of faith. It is undeniable that the emphasis rests on the first proposition. It was feared lest the jewel of peace of conscience might be lost. That is clear too from the disproportionateness of the Scripture proofs: while Rom. iii. and iv. and Eph. ii. are expressly cited, 2 Cor. v. 10 is absent; the passage which gives the unambiguous words of the Lord on judgment according to works (St. Matt. xxv. and parallels) is silently passed over, or set aside with the observation that by these works, works of faith are intended; not recognising that the statement is clear as to judgment according to works. For ourselves, we need only to refer to what has been earlier said of the relation of faith and works. But in this connection it is particularly clear that the emphasis may and ought to lie now on the one side and now on the other of those two inseparable parts of the same truth, according to circumstances and occasion. This truth has room for the story of the malefactor on the cross, as for the insistence of St James on good works. No artificial reconciliation of individual passages of Scripture has succeeded or will succeed. The more the Christian experiences the inner unity of faith and works, the more surely will he grow in this conviction. Hence, after what has been now stated as to the ground of the assurance of salvation, every suspicion is completely excluded that this would be injured by recognising the connection, in unison with the clearest Scripture statements, between the moral action of the Christian and his eternal salvation.

### *Christian Perfection.*

And now we have become acquainted with all the premisses on the ground of which a conclusion may be arrived at as to the meaning of *Christian perfection*. For they show us in what sense it is possible to speak of perfection, and in what



sense we cannot speak of it. It cannot mean perfection in the sense that in it everything is included, and that he who possesses it is incapable of higher perfection. If this were so, then all must be false that has been said of the work of each person for the whole life-task, viz. that he is to perform his duties with the capacity with which he is specially gifted, in a certain social area, in his own calling, and that his power in this work is strengthened as well by conflict as by defeat. On the other hand, if there is no such thing as perfection, all that must be false which has been said of faith as the power of a new life, of faithful fulfilment of duty, and of the Christian character; inasmuch as all these things are only other words for that which is in itself the truly 'Good' and therefore perfect in kind and in innermost content. And what is 'Good' is certainly the criterion of Christian ethics, and in the last resort of every right system of ethics. Still, it may perhaps be possible to dispute whether this word 'perfection' ought to be used, or not rather avoided as open to misconception.

We find it not infrequently in the New Testament, in many contexts. St James says: "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect" (i. 4), and he says that he is the 'perfect man' who 'offends not in word.' He therefore recognises both a 'perfect' person and a 'perfect' work. The plain antithesis, though not always expressed, is clearly with that of a Christian who is not full-grown in work and character; but it is assumed in regard to all that they can and ought to be 'perfect.' In a similar way St Paul distinguishes "babes in Christ," the immature in knowledge as in goodness generally (1 Cor. ii.); but he not only assumes that there are those who are 'perfect' in Philippi (iii. 15), but he also pleads in prayer that he may "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28), and that they may now "stand perfect and complete in the will of God" (Col. iv. 12). This perfection is therefore not the privilege of a few. And how much it is perfection in kind and not in extent he impressively affirms when he says, "Not as if I were already perfect." Thus there is the reservation that there are stages

of perfection. St Paul is aware that he "laboured more abundantly" than all the Apostles (1 Cor. xv. 10); but he certainly did not regard those other Apostles as immature Christians, but as 'perfect' in the meaning of Phil. iii. 15: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." In St John we read of 'perfect love' (1 John iv. 18)—'perfect,' that is, in kind, but not so that more love is not demanded. And as all are to possess it, it is certain that differences of degrees are not excluded. The same thing is true of the perfection of which our Lord speaks (St Matt. v. 48) (on St Matt. xix. 21, *cf.* p. 234).

The Roman Church does not stand on this high level. It is true that its public teaching affirms perfection in the Christian who loves God above all, and loves all in loving God. Even in secular life this perfection may be attained, and not merely in monastic life; and its counsels of perfection, strictly taken, do not set forth a higher perfection, but an 'easier and surer' way to perfection (p. 232). But the Augsburg Confession is right when, in regard to the actual valuation of the monastic life, it insists that perfection in the mind of the Romish Church consists of perfection in single things—laying down assignable qualities in which perfection consists (*cf.* 'Counsels of Perfection'), and consequently measurable by external tests. Even in the Protestant Churches ideas of a similar kind are current, where sin in the regenerate is denied or veiled. The confession of faith mentioned, on the other hand, delineates the plain and inexhaustible image of true Christian perfection thus: "It is fearing God with the whole soul, with earnestness, accompanied by a heartfelt assurance and trust that God is for Christ's sake a merciful God, and that we ought to pray and desire from God what is needful for us, and seek help from Him in all trouble such as each may surely expect in his calling and position; and that it is our duty to diligently practise good works towards those that are without, and perform the duties of our calling." These are the 'good works' which form the proof of our Christian character in regard to God, in relation to our neighbour, to ourselves, and to the world, as we have

already learnt. But the term 'Christian perfection' fell into disuse, and was all but crushed out of the terminology of Evangelical Christianity. The reasons were many and manifold. Romish and fanatical caricatures made the name suspicious. The comfort of justification by faith was thought to be endangered. In fact, the fundamental note of the judgment of the Evangelical Church on the Christian life had grown to be something different from that which rules in the Pauline epistles. Neither the exalted feeling to which St Paul gives utterance in all humility, nor the high praise which, along with unvarnished reprehension of the deep shadows which marked the position of the primitive Christian Churches, seemed appropriate for the conditions that obtained now. Since the world became Christian, Christianity had become of the world. And it was precisely those who were in earnest who necessarily based their judgment on all the finer ramifications of the inner life. Attention was fixed more on the imperfection of the Christian profession than on its perfection.

The idea of perfection, rightly understood, conflicts in itself just as little with the recognition of ourselves as 'miserable sinners' as judgment according to our works with salvation from judgment, by our faith—or, shortly put, as faith conflicts with works. It is precisely for this reason that giving up the use of the word 'perfection' cannot be recommended, having, as is the case, such a firm basis in New Testament usage. The term, so to speak, recognises the duty of gratitude for God's work—how great it is, and how it ever demands more and gives more; and the duty of self-encouragement in the maintenance of the position we have attained in order to fresh advancement. In this way both indolence and self-satisfaction are more securely overcome, than by merely being content with our personal imperfections. This is not adding anything new to what has already been said in treating of Christian character. The 'new man' is not perfect in its first stage, but comes into existence with the power of growth. The new man is to grow to adult manhood. This is just what is meant by the expressions—the Christian is an 'independent' entity, a whole Christian, a Christian 'character,' and his work is in itself a

whole and independent. But even in this there is found the contrary of all idea of something 'finished,' and room for the desire of perfection in another world. In order that all these thoughts may have due consideration, we regard the word 'perfection' as a term of value. And when it is taken in its true sense, then the danger is most safely obviated lest the various stages of progress made should become fixed in proud self-mirroring, or in harsh judgments on our fellow-Christians (*cf.* Phil. iii. 12 and iii. 15). And here it is, as elsewhere, easily comprehensible that the divinely ordered distinctions between members of the great kingdom have their abiding right—the theologian, the statesman, the artisan, the artist; the differences amongst these in natural equipment and mode of life. The same thing is true of the manifoldness of separate areas of society, the 'worldly' and the 'religious'; for instance, the old pietists and the 'Hahnists' of Württemberg.<sup>1</sup>

What the practical value of all the thoughts just broached, referring to the development of the Christian character, is, may in conclusion receive further light from noting that only such a character, who is a whole but not a 'finished' Christian, can conquer a foe, otherwise invincible, of the inner life—that is, splenetic humour. "For is not spleen," as Goethe says, "an inner discontent with our personal unworthiness, displeasure with ourselves ever associated with envy and spurred on by foolish vanity? We see happier (*i.e.* better) men who make us unhappy, and that is intolerable." But now it will have become clear that the Christian is thoroughly freed from all such spleen, and the reason clear too.

#### *Certain Duties and Virtues.*

A 'perfect man' in the sense just explained is like to no other. His character has on it a special impress according to his special natural capacity and his special relations; and so each person has to settle for himself what his duty is in his own fixed circumstances, both external and internal. The unity of

<sup>1</sup> I. Michael Hahn (1758–1819) was the originator of a speculative theosophist system in antagonism to pietism and orthodoxy. His numerous followers did not form a separate body. They are also called 'Michellians.'—TR.



the 'Good' is not destroyed by this, but on the contrary it is realised in all the fixed circumstances of definite men. But since these relations and these men have, in spite of all variety, something in common, we are able to speak and must speak of virtue and the axioms of duty. For instance, the virtue of benevolence is an indispensable one for all virtuous persons, and the duty of acting generously belongs to everyone, although the relation of this duty and virtue to the virtue and duty of thrift, equally incumbent on all, is diverse.

A separate presentment of the principles of virtues and duties would lead to wearisome reiteration, for the content is necessarily the same. Only at one time the content is looked at from the point of view—this and that virtue is the acquired moral capacity to act in this way or that; at another time from the point of view—this or that principle of duty says, Regard thyself as bound to act in this way or that. But such a separate treatment would not be merely wearisome, but also not suitable to the subject. For it conceals the truth of the intimate connection between virtue and duty previously discussed, namely, that by the practice of duty we become virtuous, and virtue shows itself in dutiful conduct.

A complete list of the virtues and axioms of duty to be thus presented in unison must enumerate both the contraries and the exaggerations, *e.g.* wisdom, folly, cunning; courage, cowardice, foolhardiness; confidence, pusillanimity, audacity. Further, it would be necessary to note the difference in relation to time, *e.g.* beginning and continuance. One thinks of the steadfastness of love—and also in regard to time and duration generally, *e.g.* firmness and obstinacy. Not less it would be required to observe the contrast of activity and passivity, so important in respect of person and person; and the contrast of pliability and resistance on the part of the object. In fact, to carry this out in detail would be quite endless. Still, it is necessary to remind those who fancy that they can compile a complete list of virtues and duties of this fact.

But even when we have declined to do this, it is in no wise simple to find even one general method of division, arising from the nature of the subject and so serving to illustrate it. Not

infrequently virtues of character and virtues of duty are distinguished from social virtues and social duties, while occasionally religious duties are added. But then is it not simpler on the whole to openly use the four main relations often mentioned already—of God, our neighbour, our own nature, and the world ; and then to distinguish between the virtues and duties which are always presupposed by those relations, and so can be regarded as formal? For, *e.g.*, without wisdom there is no such thing as a right attitude to God or to our neighbour ; either to the physical impulses of our own nature or to the world outside us. It is interesting to note that these latter virtues have their prelude in the province which cannot strictly be called moral. For instance, a strenuous will is by no means, as such, a moral will in its full sense ; and we have had occasion to remark that there are evil characters who, on account of this firmness of will on the formal side, are nearer to goodness than those of weak character, although the former, on the other hand, as far as the content of the will is concerned, are antagonistic to goodness. In this the one main principle of all morality, the independence of the person in relation to external nature, asserts itself directly. The true dignity of personality is independent of that subjection to law which belongs to nature. And of course this is assumed when speaking of Christian virtues and duties.

Those virtues and axioms of duty which are invariably paralleled with one another are so paralleled by reason of their connection with the three psychological divisions of the mental nature—intellect, will, and feeling. The German language has only recognised terms for the cardinal virtues related to knowledge and will. In reference to the first of these psychological divisions, intellect, we name it *wisdom* when the intelligence is at bottom, however imperfectly, so trained in clarity and depth that it judges everything from the point of view of the highest end. The grand virtue belonging to the will we call *courage* or *bravery* when it is fully trained to such activity and perseverance that it determines and governs all its doings in conformity with the highest end. The contraries of wisdom are folly and cunning ; those of courage, cowardice and foolhardiness. According as we regard these two, wisdom and courage, as

effective wholes, or as referring to each separate case of their use, we divide them into insight and prudence (discretion) as relating to the intellect; and as related to the will, into perseverance and determination. We have no special word in German for the third division related to feeling. Perhaps we might recommend 'ideal feeling' to denote the vivacity and constancy, the clarity and depth, which are in our mind's eye when we think of 'feeling' as subjected to moral training, of the state of mind in which everything is felt according to its relation to the highest end, and rated at its true value. It is well known that wisdom and courage had their place among the four 'cardinal virtues' of the ancients. But close adherence to ancient ethics has in this connection produced almost nothing but confusion. For plainly 'temperance' refers to our own nature, and 'justice' is the comprehensive social virtue of the ancients.

In these three formal fundamental concepts of wisdom, courage, 'ideal feeling,' those various subordinate notions may be arranged which are found in the language of Christian peoples, whether derived from the Holy Scriptures or not, such as watchfulness, sobriety, right judgment in all things, etc. There are also concepts which these three supreme ones include, as truthfulness in the widest sense, conscientiousness, simplicity. One may perhaps say they mark the unity of wisdom, courage, and 'ideal feeling,' and in such a way that in the same category each one of these in turn may form the leading one. But this usage of speech in respect of these terms is not clearly defined, and it is only in illustrative application that they find their value in the practical life of the Christian. How great this value is, the hymn "Holy Simplicity, marvel of grace" may witness.<sup>1</sup> This simplicity in sincerity is also the secret of the deepest influence over others; it works without violence, like Christ Himself.

If we now note, as briefly as may be, how these formal virtues and axioms of duty find their definite content in the great

<sup>1</sup> A hymn by Aug. Gottlieb Spangenberg on Christian simplicity, the Gospel 'singleness of eye,' the simple life, 1704-1792 A.D. A friend of Zinzendorf and a Moravian bishop.

sphere of the moral life, we see that love to God, of which we have spoken at length (p. 165), is essentially a humble love (p. 264). Also it may be here insisted that it is both directly built on God's love to us, and in all its relations with the world as God's world it evinces its power, and that both when its attention is immediately occupied with it or raised above it. This love of God, regarded under the above formal aspects, is religious wisdom and the courage of faith. The first is the Christian virtue so forcibly emphasised and fervently prayed for by St Paul; the latter as saving faith is distinct from the faith spoken of by him (1 Cor. xiii. 2, "all faith") in spite of the sameness of the word. Religious virtue, regarded under the aspect of 'ideal feeling,' is divine blessedness. Christian wisdom finds the right light in which to regard all changes in historical conditions, whether in politics or in the prevailing cosmic philosophy, and refrains from all hasty opinion injurious to faith. It shows itself, in a refined form, in tact, which finds special mention alongside knowledge in Phil. i. 9, "that your love may abound in all knowledge and in all *judgment*." To the courage of faith belongs patience. The New Testament does not delineate this as a weak compliance, but mainly as firmness; and indeed as a fully conscious stability, not merely generally in severely trying events, but in such as are felt to be trials of confidence in God's goodness and power. That is a saying of patient endurance, "I will trust and not be afraid," when the sun of divine love seems to be extinguished, and only appears like a far-distant star, to which the struggler with storm and darkness looks, hoping against hope. Patience and hope are therefore closely conjoined. All faith has, as often has been insisted on, a side of it turned towards the eternal future, while genuine patience is ever a conflict for this hope of faith. In conclusion, it is still to be emphasised that, inasmuch as the attitude of the Christian towards God is in all its relations maintained and fortified by prayer, it is proper to speak of prayer as a duty. We might even speak of prayer as a virtue, as in the language of devotion we speak of a man of prayer and a hero of prayer; of course accompanied by the warning not to forget the importance of



humility in prayer, and in every exhibition of the wisdom of faith and the courage of faith.

The presentment of the virtues and duties belonging to the love of our neighbour naturally presupposes what was previously said at large on the nature of Christian love of our neighbour. Outside definite Christian ethics, the supreme virtue and duty we owe to other men is not infrequently called Justice. The higher the plane of such a system of ethics, the deeper is the conception of what this justice is. Especially grand is that delineation of the just man in Plato, who was compelled to die on account of his firmness in cleaving to justice, as if he were an unrighteous man, the martyr for righteousness' sake. Still plainer and having affinity in some features with Christian love, in many modern systems of ethics, is that in which justice is regarded as devotion to the great aims of humanity. When the virtue of justice is understood in this comprehensive and profound sense, it goes far beyond the virtue of justice in the narrow meaning, or the rectitude, which in Christian ethics—in harmony with what has been said on the relation between love and law—we must call its permanently indispensable presupposition. For the idea of a disposition to love in the absence of a sense of right is for the Christian a contradiction, however often in real life, in the case of those who have just become Christians, this contradiction is found. In the Christian love of our neighbour, again, that permanent presupposition can be distinguished from its innermost nature. This presupposition really consists in respect for others. And indeed, provided it is Christian ethics of which we are speaking, this respect for others is regard for the divinely ordered destiny of our neighbour, his divine sonship in the Kingdom of God. So it is, for this reason, respect for all that our neighbour possesses of natural gifts, and for the moral position to which he has already attained in his life, whether as the result of Christian influences or otherwise. For it is God who has given each natural capacity as means for the highest ends, and this moral position is the fruit of providential guidance and of the human obedience of each to it. This respect for others is accentuated with special earnestness in the New Testament, as, *e.g.*, "Honour all men" (1 Pet. ii. 17), and "in honour pre-

ferring one another" (Rom. xii. 10); and as a virtue it is illustrated in the life of the Lord, as of His disciples. So to speak, this virtue and duty of respect, merely regarded from the other side, is modesty, 'thinking soberly' of oneself (Rom. xii. 3). Looking at another's character helps us to rightly estimate our own, and conversely. Aggrandisement of our own selves or depreciation of others is an inexhaustible fount of misunderstandings in social intercourse which only modesty dries up. What in particular we call reasonableness and toleration are clearly only parts of this modest respect and respectful modesty. The form of respect which should prevail in social intercourse is courtesy. But why we have already assigned so special a place to truthfulness, and must allow that the strict view of this duty is demanded, is clear from what has just been said of respect for others. For without this respect the highest relation of confidence, Christian love of our neighbour, is destroyed in the bud, and indeed cannot be entered upon at all, since sincerity is the very foundation of its expression. And the inner limit of this duty spoken of is now far more intelligible. The various chief relations in which this love of our neighbour manifests itself may perhaps be most simply set forth if we divide them into a class in which there is the relation of giver and receiver, and a class in which no such relation exists. The latter includes such things as peacefulness, longanimity, and a conciliatory disposition. In the former case we distinguish between the love of the receiver, or gratitude, and the love of the giver, of course bearing in mind that there can only be real love in mutual offices of kindness in giving and receiving, although in every kind of reciprocal relation. The love which bestows is attractive in friendliness of disposition, important not merely as a key to men's hearts, but also for the retention of the aroma of long-enduring fellowship of love. It is active in serviceableness to others and benevolence. In its quality of durability it is faithfulness, that 'peerless treasure.' It is obvious now how much those 'formal' virtues of wisdom, courage, 'ideal feeling' are indispensable in the love of our neighbour.

In regard to our own nature generally the union of wisdom and courage is often called the virtue and duty of self-restraint

or *temperance*. In respect of our physical nature in the narrower sense, in regard to eating and drinking it is *moderation*; in regard to the sexual impulse, *chastity*. Of this we need not speak until we come to the section on marriage and the family.

In respect of external nature it is sufficient here to note that we comprise all single virtues and duties in intelligent industry and practicality. The latter is a particularly happy expression; it marks out the right of the practical, and warns at the same time against the danger of personality being overwhelmed by it. But, again, that comes into consideration when speaking of the great social areas of human activity which make external nature minister to mind. That is to say, the inventory of virtues and duties which concludes individual ethics points us in every way to social ethics.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SOCIAL ETHICS.

#### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN HUMAN SOCIETY.

IN asserting the correctness and the importance of having a special main division in the treatment of social ethics, it is assumed, from the Christian standpoint, that the importance of individual ethics has been fully recognised. When at the turn of a century the question is asked what has been the chief feature in the picture of the departing era, one of the many answers given is: The uprise of the social question. This self-characterisation awakens all kinds of reflections. To many it is certainly convenient to cry out for a reform of society and to forget that, in the last resort, society can only be improved by the individual, and not the individual by society, however highly we may rate the influence of society on the individual. The passage in the Lamentations (iii. 39), "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" is far more applicable to that ineffective censure of circumstances and conditions, and the uncertain pressure to secure their alteration, than any other in the Old Testament, for the Christianity which recognises, in the sense of St Matt. vii. 17, the importance of the person for this work of reform, and so for the ordering of all society. One-sided regard for general improvement tends to cripple the force of personal conviction and the sense of responsibility. If the conscience of the individual is stirred, this has its real value for the whole. "The world," says George, "needs to-day high endeavour: will and freedom are not words of empty rodomontade but sacred protestations."



Nevertheless, it is inaccurate in Christian ethics to speak only of giving proof of the value of Christian virtues by the application of Christian principles of duty to the common customs of society. For in the idea of the highest Good as recognised by Christians the individual and society (individualism and socialism) are knit together in a higher synthesis nowhere else reached. Therefore, in any treatment apart from social ethics less value is assigned to the community than follows from the idea of the Kingdom of God. It is an inevitable task, necessarily involved in the fundamental principle, that attention should be given to the way in which the highest Good, the Kingdom of God, begins to find its earthly realisation in human society. If each person may well perceive the limits of his power to consider the immeasurable breadth, and depth too, of human life, in the light of this Kingdom of God, at least the problem must plainly be set. For this highest and deepest fellowship in the Kingdom of God, springing from and founded on the love of God, only then becomes actual under earthly conditions when it is realised in those conditions which now exist; that is, in the social spheres arranged by a God of omnipotent love for Christian men. Otherwise it remains empty, unreal, a pious wish, the exact antithesis of a kingdom of God, which is far from being an unsubstantial vision, but the highest reality, of the highest value. That saying, "Let us not love in word or tongue, but in deed and truth," means: "Let us love in the interchange of all the capacities and possessions which make up the fellowship of real men in this real world, as members of a family, of a nation, in the work of our hands or our heads." But while the highest, the Kingdom of God, is realised in all these fellowships, they gain a Christian impress and thus must be considered in their Christian forms. Certainly much in earthly history has only a transitory value—nay, rightly understood, is all scaffolding destined to removal. But nothing is in vain which helps to perfection, until that which is perfect comes and that which is in part is done away. It is to think meanly of the rule of God if, in spite of all imperfection and sin, we think meanly of the framework of the growing Kingdom of God formed, guided, supported by Him.

As a matter of fact, we are at present led by this history to a stage of contemplation which is distinct not only from the Roman Catholic mistrust of all that is of this world (p. 112), but also from that Reformation idea that we ought in those forms of nature certainly to honour God's will, but still without recognising in them the special value assigned to them by God's will for moral ends. In this particular, Protestant ethics may not go behind Schleiermacher, certain as it is that he only conquered a new field for the activity of the Protestant fundamental principle, and but expanded Christian theistic ideas; of course with the accompanying danger of confusing morality with civilisation. (*Cf.* below on the notion of civilisation; also of the transcendence and immanence of the highest Good (p. 140)). In connection with this, our conviction has grown more vivid and of more weight, that all those social activities have a high relative value irrespective of their Christian completion. Of this we shall have to remind ourselves when dealing with marriage and the family relationship.

A double injury arises from the neglect to appreciate social ethics at its true value. The Christian himself has a doubtful conscience when he asks, Is not every step forward into full life a step away from God? But anxious retirement from the world revenges itself only too easily by an over-valuation of the world, fear of its power or desire of its good things. And at the same time the influence of Christian ideas on society suffers loss. The regulation of society is left to the foes of Christian ethics, who willingly cast themselves into the broad stream of the world's activities, and do not stand doubtfully or critically on the bank. The problems here opened up receive illustration from Bismarck's correspondence, which has possibly contributed more to their elucidation—for those who are sympathetic—than great ethical systems. And if the right and importance of social ethics is unreservedly recognised, stress may be freely laid on its limitations. In solving the problems which life offers, it is ever creating new ones. It is not capable of solving all the riddles which arise from the complicity of society and nature, the growth of civilisation from the state of nature; and still less is it able to apprehend their inner unity, amid restless

change. And so it is perpetually compelled to put to each person afresh the question of his duty. Both these limitations have their basis in the nature of Christian ethics, in its religious foundation, and its entire earnestness with regard to responsibility—which very things do, however, make up its pre-eminence over other ethical ideals. Still, we may say that in connection with this point in Christian ethics a principle of the Christian faith becomes more directly convincing than when standing alone; namely, that if we had in every respect an adequate knowledge of God, then *faith* in God as the only God of love could no longer have any ethical quality. In the absence of this mystery of revelation the moral history of mankind, of each person, would be a merely natural development.

### *Division of Social Ethics.*

As to the division of social ethics agreement prevails in the main, that is, on what are the most important groups of human associations which ought to come under consideration. These are the family, social intercourse generally, companionship and friendship, in particular the industrial life (the social question in the narrower sense), science and art, the legally ordered community or state, religious association or the Church. The industrial group has not very long established a claim commensurate with its clearly recognised importance to be treated as a separate item. But there is no single social group can be found wider or standing out more distinctly from others than this. For the concept 'society' (in its widest connotation), which might be thought of as wider, does not in itself connote any special group, but is clearly a comprehensive term which may be used in manifold application for all the classes above named. It connotes the collective life of men regarded as an articulated whole, however various the type and character of their domestic, social, business, scientific, artistic, civic, religious life. 'Society' is different according to the period intended or the particular class alluded to—for instance, 'society' in the time of Louis XIV. and 'society' in agreement with Karl Marx. From this it follows that it cannot be compared with the enumerated types.

While, then, there is scarcely any dispute as to the subject-matter of social ethics, it is possible, in forming a theory to account for this, to be easily led into subtleties. Thus there is the once-famous theory of Schleiermacher that it is the mind's activity in reference to nature, in its power intellectually to appropriate and symbolise emotionally, to shape spontaneously and organise externally, from which the forms of society issued, when it was once recognised that this activity is in part identically and universally the same in all, and in part is individual and peculiar to each. Still, as an example, the nature of art or of friendship is only obscurely described in this way. Moreover, the theory generally presupposes a notion of ethics which we rejected at the outset as too indefinite. In this case also it is simpler to recall those fundamental concepts of the moral life, God, our neighbour, our own nature, and that which is external to it. Each one of these, or several combined, yields the special content of the social groups enumerated. Thus, under the idea of the religious nature comes the Church; from that point of view of free intercourse arises our relation to our fellow-men, which becomes fellowship in intellectual communion one with another; under the notion of law and right is that of the ordered state; in respect of external nature there is association in industrial life, science and art; of course so that in every way all the various ruling relations receive attention in various proportions and in various ways. For instance, the industrial life is a specially important and difficult province of our relation to our neighbours, as one of love, just because it is concerned with the shares we are each to have in 'natural goods.' The family is, however, the grand basis and centre of all others, having its roots in the natural relation of the sexes.

Among these groups, as above pointed out, those three are very intimately connected which relate to our mastery over nature, the industrial and technological on the one hand, the ideal group—intellectual in the narrow sense, for of course the technological department is in reality the dominion of the mind over nature—namely, art and science. This mental dominion over nature is called civilisation, and the society which correspondingly rests on it civilised society. But the word 'civilisation' is not



always strictly used. It is employed sometimes so as to include family, social intercourse, and state, and even religion itself—in short, every advance over a mere state of nature. One thinks of many treatises of the history of civilisation in this sense of the word. The disposition to widen the connotation of the term is very intelligible. For one thing, the advancement of all departments of life is greatly influenced by the progress of civilisation in the narrower sense. For instance, a higher development of the state without a higher development of scientific knowledge is in some measure inconceivable. Many a sanctuary of a once living religion has disappeared for this very reason, that its gods could not stand against advancing knowledge; and conversely, the Christian is convinced that his religion can and ought to gain by every step forward in civilisation. But still more. Even the simplest activities of the moral life, for instance in the family, are inconceivable in the entire absence of civilisation, in the absence of dominion over nature, inasmuch as they are indissolubly connected with the regulation of our own nature. Nevertheless, it is advisable to give up this comprehensive use of the word because the danger is involved, or even there is a conscious design, in such use, to confound the moral with the natural, and sacrifice the distinction between the two asserted at the outset (p. 23). Even in the name of Christianity many are to-day enthusiastic for a so-called ‘monism of civilisation,’ and by this means do violence to the clearness of ethical concepts, and to its unique character. For in regard to the family, the ordered community, and entirely so in religion, the questions that arise are, irrespective of Christian ethics, altogether diverse from those in art, science, technology. Hence we avoid the ambiguity which lies in the expression, ‘the dominion of the mind over nature,’ and rather say—the whole of social ethics is not included in the ethics of civilisation, but that the former includes social forms which are fundamentally ethical in character, while there are others which have to do with civilisation (in the plain narrow sense). Of both, Christian ethics has to show how the specially Christian ideal ought to be realised in them. Only it is of course indispensable that great stress should be laid on the immense importance of civilisation for the

development of ethics generally, and of Christian ethics in particular, as will be done in what follows; for example, the refinement of human society in the family, trade, the state, in companionship, in religious life, through technology, science and art. But this refinement, this advancement in civilisation in all the spheres spoken of, is not necessarily moral advancement. Often enough there arises by the advance a real danger of moral retrogression, and the idea of civilisation in general contains the hardest problems, as we may proceed to show, in reference to each single social group. Consequently it is more correct probably to decline the expression 'civilised communities' even as a comprehensive term for all social groups except family and Church, on account of the misunderstandings which it easily causes.

The term 'customs' deserves a word in this place on account of analogous difficulties. We call that sum of rules by the name *customs*, the authority for which is neither founded in the coercive power of law, so that one refrains from an act for fear of punishment, nor grounded on the personally free recognition of an absolute law, the breach of which brings with it a feeling of guilt; but whose basis is the judgment of the public of a greater or lesser group. He who holds this cheap is held cheap, loses his honour in this public opinion and his social status. Custom in this sense regulates the whole of human life in all the mentioned communities. We speak of family custom, artisan habits, honour among thieves, Church usages (*cf.* 'Vocation' and 'Honour'), and consequently the term is of some importance for all parts of social ethics. Customs are founded partly on that refinement of the natural human collective life of which we first spoke in dealing with the notion of civilisation; partly on the opinion set up by the particular social group concerned according to the stage of civilisation reached. For the latter reason custom is both a prelude to morality and a field for its exercise. But the school of custom does not always bring forth good fruits. We are bound to rate it highly so far as custom is the moral passed over into flesh and blood. But the limits of its value are just as clear; namely, it depends on how far it asks itself what standard of moral conviction lies at its base. And

still more, it is merely in this closely defined sense that we can speak of a custom which is become ethical. For what is ethical is in its ultimate basis something personal and, just on that very account, something that transcends mere custom (p. 18). It is also of great value as educative for the individual, and is, in fact, ultimately only the means to this end; for those who are trained to personal morality do no longer follow custom merely as custom. In this respect too what has been said of the attitude of the Christian towards honour is applicable here. Moreover, custom which is merely in keeping with a particular standard of civilisation (in the narrow sense of the term) may, although of considerable educational value, become, as is well known, a seductive temptation to immorality.

#### MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY.

Following on the above general remarks on the nature of social ethics, important reasons for the discussion of marriage and the family in Christian ethics result from the fact that these are not the creation of Christianity. Firstly, it must be noted that the Christian doctrine of marriage and the family is to be derived from the principles of the Gospel, and not from a careless collocation of passages from the Old and New Testaments. Otherwise, what account could one give without untruthfulness of the narratives of the patriarchal times? Nor do even isolated New Testament sayings form a sufficient foundation. For even that profound saying of our Lord, "They twain shall be one flesh" (St Mark x. 6-8), speaks of the indissolubility of the marriage between a man and his wife; but that it is a relation Christian in its end, character, and motive is not contained in the words themselves. And even an express appeal to the varied sayings of the Apostle would not be sufficient for this purpose; for while Eph. v. 32 appeals to the 'mystery' of Christian marriage, so far as the apparent meaning is concerned, 1 Cor. vii. 2 does not assign it a very high value. We must consequently be mindful, in this matter of Christian marriage, of the rules given earlier for the interpretation of Scripture. So then it follows from the fact above mentioned that, while it is indubitable that marriage, Christianly understood, has an incom-

parable moral value, and certain as it is that Christian morality according to the faith of Christ is the perfection of all morality, yet the institution of marriage has great moral value even where the highest ideal is not reached. This truth is in the midst of Christianity itself important; its recognition will point the right way to a judgment of the value of various legal ordinances as to marriage, possibly some in our civil law-books. Finally, the value of the Christian conception of marriage and the family for Christian ethics is independent of historical investigations on early and pre-Christian forms of the marriage relation. For generally the validity of a moral truth is independent of the means by which it has asserted itself in the course of history. What our present duty is, is determined by our present moral insight, in whatever way it may have pleased God to lead us slowly to it. Mankind, as a whole, can judge in no other way. The mystery of marriage as a type of the union betwixt Christ and His Church could neither be understood nor appreciated until the Lord and His Church were formed on the earth; but now the Church is there it can be understood and experienced by its members. If this principle is recognised we may add that what is asserted as to the relation of the sexes in the grey dawn of history has in no way such secure basis as the originators of such theories seem to suppose. For example, the theory that in the so-called patriarchal period not only was the man the ruler in the family, but there was a 'matriarchate' also, in which the mother was the chief factor in the family life, and that a period preceded this, before the family relation existed, when in the tribe promiscuous intercourse of the sexes was the usage. (Cf. Bachofen, Morgan, *Population and Degeneration*, in the literature of the Social Democratic propaganda.) Against this view objections have been raised not merely in the name of history, but also from the side of scientific research. Still, however that may be, historical researches have never got to the very beginnings; and they concern the Christian faith merely in the judgment on sin. More important for us is the reference to the undoubted fact—because ever presenting itself in experience—that in the life of the family the natural and the moral are more closely conjoined than anywhere else. The one impinges



on the other, and one arises out of the other. In this, for the Christian, there lies an inexhaustible incentive to prove here too the truth of the Pauline saying of the depth of the divine wisdom; as for the non-Christian there is the insistent temptation to doubt not only God but also the independent basis of the moral element. And we shall see that this doubt may unite itself with apparently strong faith, and particularly when the demand is made to deny this natural element in the name of faith. It does indeed remain a mystery that God has so inseparably conjoined the ethically highest with the naturally lowest. It is a mystery which we reverence while experiencing its blessings, and of which no human intelligence can affirm that it has apprehended it in all its depth. For this very reason shame is given as its guardian.

By these remarks the way is paved for what follows. The definite Christian idea of marriage must be first of all treated without discussing theoretical or practical doubts, for it is only thus that it can justify itself against these doubts, and give the right clue to their solution.

### *The Christian Idea of Marriage.*

Marriage is the mutual moral life-association of a man and a woman. The essence of marriage lies in the unity of the naturally sexually different and of the moral relation between them. It is erroneous to think only on the union of two persons of different sex; just as erroneous to think merely of the moral union of two persons without consideration of the sex element. In the first case the ethical element is left out of sight, and in the second it is not marriage but friendship that is thought of. All that is ethical in Christian marriage is conditioned by the natural; all that is natural ought to be wholly and fully stamped with the ethical. And indeed in this natural element there is not merely the physical but the mental differences of the sexes concerned; and in both respects there is the general as well as special (or individual) elective affinity arising from this difference. This mental difference of the sexes has been variously defined. It is, for instance, said, as by Lotze, that "the mind of the female particularises as that of man generalises"; or as

Paulsen says, "Man seeks respect, woman love." No such formulas exhaust the reality which offers itself to experience, and which poets present in different aspects, giving expression to the deep feeling that the sexes in their union represent man.

This inexhaustibly rich abundance of material (the physical and mental nature) gets in marriage an ethical impress, and that in all the fundamental relations of ethics : self-discipline, love of our neighbour, overcoming the world, trust in God ; above all, in the mutual relations of the married pair. It is only where there is real self-control that love between the sexes is possible without injury to personal self-respect. Otherwise, when there is a want of mutual respect the nearest neighbour becomes estranged from the nearest neighbour. By self-control, on the other hand, this grave danger of degradation becomes a means of self-conquest. The love of our neighbour is illustrated in a special form in the married relationship, and it has unique power, depth, glory. The sexual difference is in its way the greatest possible difference that can exist, and the union consequently forms a unique relationship. No man, however perfect, feels, knows, or wills precisely in the same way as a typical woman. When these thus diverse become one in love, then there is a unity in diversity. We might even explicitly say that a new operative power becomes the possession of the married persons, for there is in reality a new experience not actually found in the consciousness of any human being without this union of the greatest contrasts. It really involves seeing with other eyes—which are still their own—hearing, feeling, judging, willing, acting, helping ; and this not by the sacrifice of the personal nature of each, but by its enrichment. Isolated examples disparage rather than interpret the great fact. Still, we may remember how the man's view of things, learning to see them with his wife's eyes, gains in appreciation of the trifles of life, which still are important, and apprehends the power of patience as a special gift ; how the woman, by sympathy with the life-work of her husband, is preserved from frivolousness. The married life of Luther, and, in the broad current of modern life, the sermons of Schleiermacher and the letters of Bismarck to his wife, are grand illustrations for us German people of the truth

here set forth. They all at the same time show what in reality is the indestructible foundation of an ideal marriage, and that is faith in God. Otherwise, in the larger as in the smaller world, the world of the man and that of the woman are no longer the same. When the natural ardour is extinguished, differences of temperament, education, and culture, built on the strong foundation of sexual difference, grow into mental separation. Of course an upright will, even when it is not Christian at all, may fight against this tendency to a mere 'living with one another.' But the trials to which such a will is subjected may easily be too much for its power when the battle lasts long; and lifelong habit, with the obtrusive examples of many sordid marriages, blunt its energy. It is otherwise when a common aim which is more than earthly unites them; when access to the eternal home stands open, and there is common prayer for forgiveness and grace; faith in the one eternally true God of love, such as makes all human love, of bridegroom, of husband, father, mother, brother, and friend, a symbol of its power. And also in this fellowship with God, which is the firm foundation of every true Christian marriage, one spouse ministers to the other in a way not otherwise possible.

So far we have considered the nature of marriage in its significance for the married pair as persons who in marriage, and only by the completion thus given, experience personal advancement in the good, and consecrate themselves to God in this high school of faith and love. But this does not completely describe the nature of marriage. Even on its natural side it points beyond the persons as a pair to society as a whole. This smallest of communities among men is the grand basis of all others. And even in this respect that which is naturally sexual has in marriage a wholly and fully ethical quality. The new generations essential to the earthly development of the Kingdom of God, the product of marriage, are trained by the married pair in the Christian family, in each home, in the particular circumstances which are specially prepared by natural love, for which no substitute is possible.

Both purposes which make up the nature of marriage, the personal benefit of the married pair and the procreation and

training of children, are most completely realised together. The personal love of the espoused has no field for its exercise that touches it closer than the bringing up of children; in no other point can a unity of interests which otherwise are often widely separate be found; and no other makes such demands on the most personal devotion. On the other hand, this task cannot be successful unless they have gained already their true personality, and have found that higher unity of their individualities in real affection. Hence it is just as erroneous to say that the purpose of marriage is personal completion and not mutual agreement in bringing up children, as to affirm the contrary. But it is intelligible that, in accordance with the tendency of the times, now the individual and now the social aspect may stand in the forefront. At the end of the eighteenth century it was the first, at the end of the nineteenth the second—of course with opposite dangers. For the truth is, it is a question of a single purpose with a double side. All that has been advanced on the relation between the individual and the community (pp. 143 ff.) is equally applicable to marriage, and has here a particularly profound significance. Here too man must not put asunder what God has joined together; namely, the principle of matrimonial fellowship on the basis of the natural sexual relation. But if it happens, as a matter of fact, that God denies the blessing of offspring, then this raises a question for the Christian couple in what other way they can attain a unity of purpose, and find thereby a means of showing their mutual personal completeness. The answer will be different in each case, but at any rate this love will always aim at avoiding secluding itself in weak and selfish isolation, but open itself to others in need. Not necessarily by adopting children; for the failure to have offspring of their own necessitates double precaution in considering their capability of bringing up those of others. But it is undoubted that numerous childless marriages give illuminative evidence that even this deprivation may be turned to a glorious account. And here not only the Christian principle finds illustration, that all things may be turned to the best account, but also the proposition often insisted on of the relation of the individual to the community; in this case the



relation of fellowship between the married couple themselves and to the human society propagated by means of marriage. So much does everything find its end in marriage in the completion of united personalities, of course in love, that even this essential deficiency in the natural foundation of the marriage tie, its non-fulfilment of its social purpose, may be overcome and find its compensations.

In the ideas of marriage are included its indissolubility, monogamy, the fundamental equality of rights of the married couple. And these concomitants are indispensable both on account of the mutual fellowship of the married pair and on account of their relation to their children. It is only possible for that many-sided life of fellowship to perfect itself by such persons as are inseparably joined together. If, as in the case of polygamy, it is the dishonour of woman that is most evident, this is not absent in the man's case either. The same thing is true of the position of the rising generation. Not less is the indissolubility of the marriage tie implicate in the thought of this many-sided life-fellowship. And the serious endeavour to maintain it is impossible if the possibility of separation is even thought of. Further, the rightly regulated training of offspring is impossible. Finally, there is only a truly ethical life-fellowship when essential equality of rights is admitted. For if both the parties aimed at the like highest Good, but not with equal personal independence, then it could not be the like at which they aimed; and the same thing would be repeated in reference to all the subordinate ends included in the highest Good. In equal measure the effect on the family is profoundly bad if the command, "Honour thy father and *thy* mother," does not apply in the fullest sense. But this fundamental claim of equality of rights in all respects does not exclude but includes, by reason of the difference in the sexes, the right of the man to be the 'head of the woman' and of the home. But this control is the opposite of coercion; it is rather love itself under the ethically determined conditions of a true marriage and as settled by nature.

On these three notes—the 'indissoluble,' 'equal' marriage of 'one man to one woman'—it is quite clear that it is not

permissible to mix up the pre-Christian or even the Jewish ethical views with those that are Christian. The most recent history of missions bears witness to the difficult questions of conscience we are compelled to face at home and abroad, in order at the right time, and in the right place, to insist upon the Christian estimate of marriage. On the other hand, we are not to co-ordinate the question of a second marriage with the three requisites given. For this is in no wise contradictory to the Christian ideal, however often, as a matter of fact, this is asserted from want of ethical knowledge, and is even declared to be contrary to duty. But to see in a second marriage real unfaithfulness to the first, because personal completeness is in general supposed to be accomplished in this alone, is a want of accurate understanding and right estimate of the natural side of marriage.

From the nature of marriage the principles that should guide us in entering upon it are easily deducible. Marriage is not ethically justifiable either when there is an absence of a real sentiment of love, or when this is not under moral control. The marriage for money comes under the first heading, as also the so-called marriage of convenience; the latter is true of mere amorousness and the frenzy of passion. Only we may not forget that this irrefragable proposition finds the most various application in the fulness of life's interests, and that the wisdom and power of divine providence are able to overcome much human ignorance and confusing self-deception, though often by the discipline of trouble. But this does not affect the question of what ought to be and might be if men's wills were clearer and stronger. The same thing is true when we come to define more closely the meaning of the above proposition, and find that it is of individual application. For, speaking generally, we may just say—that in order to the real completeness of the marriage union, and that the personal perfection of each in their calling and relation to society may be possible, the differences between the married couple must not be too great; and yet there ought to be some difference. Otherwise the one has nothing to give and the other nothing to receive; and they are not independent in their unity, or their independ-

ence excludes fellowship. This statement is true, of course, in varied meaning and measure, of such differences as those of social position, age, education, religion. The two first are at times plainly a less hindrance than the two last, and they are all, with the above reservation, a limitation to marriage. But a glance at life shows how little an intelligence otherwise clear and practical avails in this particular sphere as a guarantee of a wise choice; how pressing the danger is of being blinded by the glamour of passion, and overestimating one's power—as if it were an easy thing to do, for instance, to bridge over the gulf of a different educational standard. It is because the nature of marriage has its foundation in the most imperious of natural propensities that this is so. So much the more needful to remember, “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (St James i. 5); “that is the true way to gain wisdom.” There is no other way, probably, of winning that true naturalness in the intercourse of the sexes, without which a choice, clear in its reasons and yet leaving room for spontaneousness, is not conceivable. At a point where man's spirit and nature so strangely meet, fellowship with God—who created man's spirit and is the Author of nature—is the sole guarantee of their higher synthesis in man. It is only such personal sincerity that is in the position to find right answers to the innumerable questionings which start up in this region: for instance, whether youthful love and early engagement is a surer safeguard than a self-imposed restraint on the free unfolding of the natural affections.

On the principles thus laid down marriage is for the Christian a divine ordinance (St Mark x. 6-8), and indeed as such the basis of Christian society. A complete ethical manhood formed by the union of the sexes grows into an ethical humanity, and so individual and social ethics here find their point of unity, and all other forms of society rest on marriage. This is consequently, for the earthly development of the Kingdom of God, the most important of human fellowships. Of course only for its earthly realisation, since its sexual base appertains to this present form of our existence merely. Those who are accounted worthy to receive that world “neither marry nor are given in

marriage" (St Mark xii. 25). Certainly "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away"—elementary knowledge, art, the control over the world; and even the Church will be different when all is 'made new.' But marriage on its natural side belongs to the transitory in a wholly different and profounder way than even these intellectual activities. Still, so long as it endures it is second to no other association, but rather is the divinely ordered and most spiritual sphere of all; not merely one of the means, but one of the chiefest means, for the realisation of the Kingdom of God rightly understood. Consequently it is under Christian conditions a duty to seek marriage, where there is no special reason which makes celibacy a duty for the individual. Apart from such cases, it ought to be acknowledged by everyone that there is no way to personal sanctification and usefulness to the corporate whole that is more pleasing to God. The popular jocose sayings on bachelorhood and spinsterhood rest in good part on the Christian belief which penetrates the general consciousness that marriage is the securest, because the most natural, field for the exercise of personal ability, and of all work for others; that much-vaunted holiness and self-devotion are severely tested by the daily trials of the Christian household; that it is a fact that the man who is famous in his vocation only becomes a whole man by the unprejudiced criticism of the genuine wife. And that other point is just as clear, that, although marriage is a means to advance the Kingdom of God, if the Lord of the Kingdom demands by His gifts and His leading of any individual abstinence from marriage, whether because the natural presuppositions, sexual sensibility, or business circumstances are wanting, or because such person feels that he cannot adequately fulfil the task appointed him, in the way duty demands in any other vocations, without abstaining from marriage, his place in the Kingdom of God is unaffected by this. The wide scope for possible self-deception again becomes obvious, and against this also there is the only remedy repeatedly mentioned. But that the question is not one of manufactured difficulties may be realised by thinking of the missionary or the travelling explorer. And here too we must



maintain that what duty is for such an one only the person himself can decide. It is precisely in this province that the counsels of the most famous counsellors with especial frequency lead away from that evangelical freedom which is one with God's will in respect of its full obligatoriness.

This development of the idea of marriage is combated from several opposite quarters. To one it appears too lax, to another too stern, and to leave too much or too little room for the play of the natural propensions. Too little room by the stern requirements of monogamy, indissolubility, and some sort of supremacy on the part of the man, even with fundamental equality of rights. If the last-mentioned objection is essentially a new one, the two former are clearly the revival of pre-Christian views, but elaborated altogether differently in detail and made more acceptable. At one time there is biting sarcasm over the innumerable unhappy marriages, whether among the lower orders through the pressure of hard work, or among the more fortunate classes who have no life-purpose (Bebel's book on *Woman*, Ibsen's *Puppenheim*); at another time there is the preaching of free love in the attractive guise of the novel, representing the bonds of matrimony as disturbing the proper development of the 'ego,' or in sheer coarseness claiming that nature should not be in bondage. Such opinions are felt by the Christian to be an insistent summons to seek to obviate the miseries of the 'conventional marriage,' and to remove the social obstacles to family life, yet only so as to carry out the Christian ideal. The 'freedom of the flesh' is to him slavery from which Christ has set us free. But so much the more seriously will he be compelled to note the objections which see in this elaborated idea of marriage a wrong compliance with sensual desire, and to protest against them generally or explicitly in the name of Christianity (*cf.* Grabowsky's impressive words).

This latter protest is all the more worthy of note as history shows that those who raised it have contributed much to the elevation of family life. Sexual licence, easiness of divorce, the degradation of woman called forth a counter-movement even in the Greek world itself. But the Stoic and Neo-Pythagorean philosophies were as little capable of a thorough-going reforma-

tion affecting the whole national life as legislative measures. It is the incontestable merit of the Christian Church that it translated sublime words and wishes into plain fact. But even the Church which sanctified marriage looked upon the unmarried state as the higher and more perfect; understood the word chastity of the non-satisfaction of the sexual impulse; was inclined to look upon sanctity as summed up in chastity, and, conversely, to regard the sexual propension as the root of sin. On the one side the Tridentine Council condemned those who did not recognise marriage as a sacrament which was the means of supernatural grace, and on the other side those who would not concede that virginity is a state of higher perfection. Even many Protestants occupy an inconsistent position in regard to marriage. Thus, if they consider natural desire as essentially sinful, they plainly forsake the Evangelical line of teaching, and are in contradiction both with the plain ruling of Jesus on marriage (St Mark x. 6-8), and with such passages of Scripture (*e.g.* 1 Tim. iv. 3) as are explicitly adverse to such reasoning. It sounds like Christian piety, and is in truth heathenish, when at the present time the question is put, with or without connection with the introduction of Buddhist ideas—How can Christians wish to bring children into the world, when they surely know that they will be born into a world of sin and misery? Christianity, it is said, has not renovated personality in history. As if Christianity were cognisant of such a redemption as this, by the annihilation of the desire of life by natural process!

Still there are many to whom such assumptions and arguments are unwelcome, who yet share in a feeling of the higher value of the unmarried state at least secretly. For proof of this they readily appeal to some expression of the Apostle Paul. But that he did not give his 'counsel' (in the sense of the Roman Catholic Church) in contradistinction to commands we have seen earlier (p. 233). Here the point is as to the meaning of such expressions in reference to marriage, and the value set upon it generally by the Apostle. Now, in his elaborate explanation (1 Cor. vi.) it is certain that he insists upon the nearness of the Advent as the reason why he desires the celibate

state also for others (v. 26), and prefers it on account of the 'trouble in the flesh' marriage will bring (v. 28). In this same connection the self-same Paul distinguishes more strongly than elsewhere his 'opinion' from the Lord's 'command,' although with the clear consciousness that he has "the Spirit of the Lord"; and in other utterances he places marriage so high that it is the type of the fellowship between Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 32; *cf.* 1 Cor. ii. 3). But undeniably he regards marriage essentially as a concession to weakness (v. 2); says, quite generally, that it is morally good "not to touch a woman" (v. 1); designates continence as a gift of grace (v. 7); and grounds this judgment on the fact that not only are the unmarried freer from worldly anxiety, but also freer to care for "the things of the Lord" (vv. 32-34). If we reflect on all this, and also note how strongly St Paul lays emphasis on the dignity of the man in comparison with the woman, then we may be inclined, in Evangelical ethics, in harmony with the principles founded on the usage of Scripture, to judge much as follows. In the saying of the Lord (St Mark x.) the position in regard to marriage corresponding with the genius of the Gospel finds clearer expression than in isolated utterances of the Apostle, which may have been influenced by his personal idiosyncrasy, his period, and his view of the frightful licentiousness of the surrounding world. The Lord Himself, in that plain saying treating of the indissolubility of the marriage union, and of the equality of rights of man and wife as something quite obvious, because it is God's ordination, and not adding any single prescript whatever, here as everywhere left it to the spirit of freedom to make its deductions from the principles laid down. In this sense Luther's battle about marriage was a harking back to the Gospel and a battle on its behalf. And so were all the new convictions which the German mind, under the influence of the Gospel, acquired as to the interpenetration of the natural and the moral in marriage, and of its completely unique character for each individuality; and that, in this way, the sanctification of every person, as of the corporate whole, is inseparable from marriage and the family (Schleiermacher).

Whoever considers this judgment as to the attitude of the

Apostle in regard to marriage, as justifiable from the Protestant principle of an appeal to Scripture, will be the very one who will also venture to go back on the question whether these passages exhaust the whole depth of the Pauline sayings. It has already been insisted on (p. 330) that the sexual relation is one that in an especial degree belongs to the transitory conditions of our earthly development (p. 331). Now, has not he who, in his individual opinion as to his duty, rejects this earthly means for the attainment of the highest purpose, the moral right to say (like St Paul in his glance at the nature of this means) that not to require them is ethically right, and even to wish that were the case with others; especially if also, like St Paul, he insists on the danger of self-deception on this subject? Is not that a fresh application of the saying of Jesus Christ (St Matt. xxii. 30) under definite conditions? Is it not a logical consequence from the nature of the Christian good as transcendent? From the Roman Catholic depreciation of the natural (and its obverse side, the overvaluation of it), this would be something fundamentally and entirely different from the idea of the super-erogatory and meritorious. It would be merely a due recognition of the right of private judgment and duty—for apart from this those who are unmarried sin—and that according to its special content, by remembering that our highest good is realised in a whole of ordered ends; and becomes actually complete under other conditions of existence. St Paul therefore designates his own dutiful realisation of a great good, in the scale of 'Goods' (in which he without fanaticism assumes the standpoint of perfection), as a gift of grace, and desires it for others. Only if we are to complete this train of thought we should admit that the various single sayings used by St Paul, which can plainly be understood in that wider sense, are conditioned by his personal and general situation.

*Consequences, and Various Questions.*

Here in connection with marriage is also the place to speak of *chastity*—'morality' in the clearly narrowest sense of the word. That 'chastity' in marriage is not only the opposite of adultery, but modesty (not, however, prudishness) in the



deepest sense, follows from the above idea. Among the properties of true love a prominent place (1 Cor. xiii. 5) is given to its not "behaving itself unseemly." The physically sensual act, as we saw, becomes ethically personal, in which lies its freedom and its obligation. If those who love one another "stand with their love before God," it is in this that, with their joy in God's gift, they also find the power of self-control; and also the power of dutiful abstention arises out of such love. If in this sense a true marriage is the high school of chastity, so is chastity before marriage the most personal of marriage portions; the greatest pledge of happiness. The different judgment found in very wide areas of society on this demand of chastity in the young man and the maiden cannot in any way be Christianly justified. How much in this respect public opinion is poisoned, how largely dishonour is done to the idea of marriage, and how shameless the idea of shame, was shown by Björnson's 'Hands Schuh,' published in an otherwise respectable journal. Conscientious doctors testify that purity is health, even when preserved after hard struggle (*cf.* Ribbing, *Sexual Hygiene*). On the other hand, the beast in man becomes the more craving by weak indulgence, and the passions more unnatural than in beasts themselves (*cf.* cases in magisterial courts). That unchastity means to the Christian a dishonour to his person, and lovelessness under the guise of love, follows from what has been said before. The prostitution brought to the light of day in the society of the present only superficially disguises the widely existing slavery of women. Contempt for women prevails everywhere where the love of one man for one woman is undermined and this ideal no longer illumines and warms the youthful mind. It ought to be especially insisted, in opposition to the poetic glorification of impurity, that the true poetry of life perishes in it; the emotions fullest of promise languish; and the fatality is not confined to the individual, the corporate life is endangered at its very roots. The trade of the prostitute has been and is the beginning of the end of nations. Therefore society ought not to countenance prostitution in any form, as having the right of existence, but rather counteract its influence in every way for the protection of future generations.

For this end there is need of renewal right down to the inmost sensibility. Everyone must use the means for bringing it about—self-control, work, prayer. The question is one of a crusade for the salvation of the future; the more successful, the more it is prepared for in the quiet of the pure heart and steadfast will. There is scarcely any point in which the task of Christian ethics is as difficult as it is pressing. But it is exactly when due account is unreservedly taken of the ‘sexual need in man and wife’ that the truth of the above propositions becomes all the clearer, while the inclination to enter on half-considered measures of reform grows less (for instance, what disparate ideas are combined in that grand word, ‘the right of motherhood’!); and at the same time the courage grows greater to work for a brighter future in which also in this region the imperial freedom—‘all things are yours’—may wrest new victories.

### *Family.*

Also in the *family* relation, as in marriage, there is a special need that, as ethical love is on all sides conditioned by blood-relationship, it should be in every way ethically defined. For this too consists in the fellowship of moral personalities with those who are to grow to personalities, the children; and as growing up with one another, the brotherhood and sisterhood of the family life. To this is to be added, among the better classes, close domestic relationship with those who are not equal in social position, the servants and dependants. The wealth of moral suggestions which are included in this is so great that among the strongest features of present-day dreams of the future there is scarcely one more God-forsaken thing than the wish to destroy family life. Among the tasks of the future there is scarcely one that is plainer than that the preservation and re-establishment of family life, in correspondence with the new conditions, should keep pace with the advance of all other forms of society. And as a fact the moral value of their reciprocal influence is for all the members of the family immeasurable. It has been rightly said that children in the family give more help than culture in the battle against

selfishness. That is true of the selfishness of age as of children. In the constant presence of the workaday life, passed in common by those who are united by natural ties, there lie hidden moral problems, tests, powers, conflicts, advancement such as no human wisdom can exhaust by reflection.

### *Education of Children.*

The education of children by their parents is a duty from which the claims of other duties in other social spheres cannot absolve, and a right which, as against the tendency to the dominance of the school, must be jealously preserved. This right and this duty belong to the father and the mother in the unity conditioned by their individuality. Even famous men have been known to be wanting in the appreciation of the dignity of woman and the blessing of family life who never knew a mother's care. The voluntary renunciation of this duty by numberless fathers is the surest evidence of their enslavement by social claims; and they finally become as inefficient and dangerous to society as to their own household and themselves. The passage 1 Tim. v. 8 refers to neglect of those nearest to us as a step back into heathen morality. The aim of education is the moral maturity of children on the basis of their assimilation of the moral quality of their parents — of course inclusive of useful branches of knowledge (but not so that these form the main end), and certainly not a mere heap of disconnected pieces of knowledge. Inasmuch as the jewel of the moral quality of the parents is sonship in the Kingdom of God, the Christianly moral education of children must be essentially religious. But the kernel needs a shell. To find the proper measure and form of religious influence is the crown of parental wisdom. In general it may be affirmed that, if sound, it is essentially an education in reverential and trustful love, and that so that, as Luther says, the parents are God's representatives. The assimilation of moral qualities must be not by compulsion but by free suggestion, in the way God Himself, the great Educator, acts. Natural interest will in itself perceive the opportunity of setting definite tasks, and of administering indispensable chastisement as purposeful means of

training. "High thoughts and a pure heart are what we ought to supplicate God for"; and then the educational power of the parents, ruled by this principle, cannot be other than a means of self-education under the same guiding star. After all, it is clear that it is rightly said that love in relation to education shapes itself in the form of authority and respect, and the sole, all-comprehending virtue of a child is obedience based on gratitude, and trustful reverence. The more real the authority of the parent and the respect of the child, the more securely do they change their forms with change of age. It is especially difficult to exercise influence on young people who are growing up when the mother easily seems to be petty, and the father austere, because there is a want in them of something of the swing of perennial youth and the power to sympathise. Pædagogics is an art much described. But in that deepest of its branches, personal education, it may in general be said not to admit of a complete description. Various examples and rules from real life, such as one found in 'Old Flattich,'<sup>1</sup> are commonly more effective than discursive directions.

Would that something of the same sort could be said of that present urgent question of domestic servants! It is undoubtedly the case that with the disappearance of the old relation an important means for a real understanding between classes and masses has been lost. What each person may do in his limited sphere to restore its old value a Christian conscience will not unplainly dictate. And such an one knows that it is not merely the wish to be accommodating that makes it hard to confute the talk on the overpowering might of circumstances. On this subject Christian principles found in the New Testament are the more illuminative as their first application was to a world of slavery. Christianity did not at once abolish this social arrangement, certain as it is that it was incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel and must gradually yield to it. How much more in a Christian world ought mutual sympathy in joy and sorrow to be developed in such

<sup>1</sup> See Herzog, *Encyclopædie (sub voce)*. Flattich lived A.D. 1713-1797, and was famous as a 'Pietist' for his originality and devotion as an educator of youth.—TR.



ways as social differences allow, in faith and by fellowship in the highest things! This too not by the restoration of vanished patriarchal forms, but in new shapes working from within.

*Legal Recognition of Marriage.*

Legal recognition of this 'fast tie' is needful for marriage not merely on account of the actual wickedness of human society; no reasonable man will deny it for its own sake. It might, so far as itself is concerned, appear that marriage, as the most thoroughly personal of all forms of social intercourse, had nothing to do with law. On closer consideration it will appear all the more needful, not merely on account of its varied relation to civic life, legitimacy of children, inheritance of property; but generally—provided we have determined aright the value of legal arrangements—this union especially stands in need of the recognition of law as a many-sided life-association for the mutual interchange of the highest personal property, in order to prevent any doubt in the public judgment, and avoid all other difficulties and uncertainties with respect to it. Obviously this public recognition is an affair of the State in its legal aspect. For the Church cannot of itself busy itself with the law. The Augsburg Confession does with great clearness explicitly reckon the marriage contract among the matters which belong to the civil government; on the contrary, the Tridentine Council claims it for the Church. Although the Evangelical Church in Germany for a long time performed the legal part of the marriage contract, it did this (in harmony with Protestant principles) by the concession of the State, which so far gave over its control as to unite with the legal contract the blessing of the Church in one ceremonial act. It was a question in 1873 whether this condition of things should be abolished for the German Empire; and for clear-thinking men it became a very serious point of advisability, but not one of faith. It is always an injury to the Church when these two distinct things are mixed up. By the civil procedure the duties of members of the Church are of course not affected.

*Divorce.*

Divorce is also a civil question. Marriage is according to its nature (see above) an indissoluble union, and if the unconditional saying of St Mark x. 11 appears, according to St Matt. v. 22, to admit of an exception—assuming that the words “save for the cause of fornication” are genuine—then that exception is only the recognition of an actually existent fact; for by adultery marriage is *ipso facto* dissolved. On the other hand, Jesus Christ does not by His saying interdict the injured party from resuming cohabitation in certain circumstances, by the exercise of pardon, however little it may be possible to demand this in all cases; since it must be left entirely to the judgment of the person concerned, and emphatically so, since it is a matter of purely personal feeling as to what duty demands. The passage in St Mark (x. 11) is not weakened by that of 1 Cor. vii. 10–15, for St Paul merely says that if the unbelieving husband or wife actually dissolves the marriage the other party is to remain content. On the contrary, careful consideration of this saying of St Paul may lead to a proper understanding of the saying of the Lord. St Paul does not recognise divorce in the case of Christians, and Jesus Christ has declared the divine idea of marriage, while knowing well, and not calling in question, the fact that “Moses for the hardness of your hearts” suffered divorce. Now, since Christian nations undoubtedly do not consist of those only who are really true disciples of Jesus, it is only in appearance that the Catholic Church, with its opposition as a matter of principle to any divorce, is the truer protectress of Christ’s word, even when we leave out of account the unworthy shifts with which it finds a loophole for the great ones of the earth, as in the case of Napoleon; a mere failure in form was held sufficient to justify a declaration of nullity. The State, in the case of a Christian nation, has merely the moral duty, in harmony with its real well-being, to render all easy divorce impossible, since the moral educative power of marriage for the married persons, as for their family, can scarcely be overestimated. But where the chief conditions of the marriage tie have been set at nought, its right and duty

is to give legal validity to this fact. What ought to be the reasons for separation in various cases must be subject to the determination of the civil law and legal process, unless the moral purpose of divorce is to be nullified. The Christian Church has the duty of using all the moral means that are at her command to secure the voluntary fulfilment of the command of Christ for Christians and by Christians, as well as to influence the spirit of legislative procedure through the moral earnestness of the members of the Church. But if this moral means remain fruitless, then as a national Church it ought to rest content with the decisions of the State, and possibly set up a severer standard where questions of the re-marriage of divorced persons arise, which it may the more easily do as now the legal portion of the marriage contract is no longer its affair.

### *The Status of Woman.*

When Protestant ethics speaks of marriage and the family it must also think of the question of the *position of woman*. For in clearly setting forth the importance of marriage, it may not overlook the fact that millions of women cannot find in marriage their highest vocation, the vocation of woman. And so much the less as Protestant ethics cannot point to the nunnery as in its way a grand solution of the difficulty. Of course this question of woman's position is very closely connected with other present problems of social ethics, and particularly with the economic question. The manifold answers suffer from not paying a really sufficient regard to the importance of marriage and the family. But even irrespective of possible solutions, the question itself is frequently obscurely put when no clear distinction is drawn between the proposals for improvement called forth by undeniable abuses, and the attempts made to secure the all-round equality of rights for women. It will easily be seen that, the more the former are put to practical test, the more light falls on the latter.

The exigency of the position does not depend merely on that fact from which we started, but almost as much on another, that by no means all who have found the highest calling of woman are equal to it. And in reality that is not true merely

of the mill-hand, who cannot attend to her home, but also of the lady who does not want to stay at home, or is even a stranger in her own house, because she does not find her sphere of work there; and, as things are, for the most part cannot find it, since she was not trained to this, but to mere amusement, and only knows how to amuse herself—with her husband, her children, her household, her life. And, besides, the mill-hand has neither the time nor the education for fulfilling this vocation of woman. But now between these two facts—that not all women can find their highest calling in marriage and the family, and that not all who find it are fit for fulfilling it—not merely the undeniable connection subsists that the deficient capacity for this vocation of woman lessens the inclination of man to render it possible for them, and of woman to undertake it; but there exists, and indeed in a much wider degree, a connection between the different remedies. The only suitable remedy for curing the one evil does of itself lessen the other. That is to say, let the education of girls be different, an education in ‘self-reliance and common sense,’ so that they may be able to train others. In this way those who are shut out from marriage by their providential path would find a suitable sphere. There is everywhere a want of trained female forces for domestic employment of every kind, nursing, teaching, education. It has been purposefully asked whether there should not be a training time for woman for her social work corresponding to the period of compulsory military service. Even now there is no want of the true nobility which prefers an active sympathy in the immeasurable province of womanly service to the empty life of pleasure, which at the same time so often exercises a disturbing influence on society by its wearisome gossip. It may be quietly left to the teaching of experience where the limits of this province lie, if the main truth is recognised that, as every sphere of usefulness is in its depths a service of love, it is woman that has quite peculiar gifts for this service, to which the highest dignity and honour belong, and that her service is all the more womanly service the more clearly it has reference to family life. To make girls fit for such service must be the aim of all reforms. In this is included that they are



truly made free for such service, and this freedom is not only the means of learning to serve, but is part of the genuine service itself.

The more remote the service of women gets from family life, the more shifting do the boundaries of the question of woman's position become in the other point above mentioned, as to the all-round equality of rights with man. The term employed, '*emancipation* of woman,' her deliverance from slavery, reminds us of the enormous guilt of the world of men, but contains, when this guilt is not minimised, a reference in itself to all the exaggerations which have allied themselves with and done injury to the whole movement. In any case the chief reason for complete equality, the equality of mental endowment, is dubious, because this expression is ambiguous—it may be equality in the sense of 'equal in value' or 'equal in kind.' Now, he who recognises equality of value is not compelled to admit equality of kind. A judgment which is not entirely external cannot but consider the mutual attraction which exists between the sexes as founded purely on great physical differences, however difficult it may be to find a formula for them. Supposing it be granted that the various mental faculties are present in like strength, that in particular a woman's understanding is not less acute than that of the man, the memory not less capacious or true—still these factors stand, so to speak, under another denominator; the inner soul of sympathy, of emotion is different. The proofs asserted—the talent for rule of Elizabeth of England, of a Maria Theresa, a Victoria—only show that it is possible in special circumstances for a woman to reach the height of man in political life. Equality of value in every respect cannot be maintained by a reference to these illustrious names, and appeal made to them as the exceptions that prove the non-existence of a rule. To this psychological peculiarity there corresponds the difference in physical energy. Only man's fancy can assign to a woman less fortitude than a man when we only think that there is a fortitude of patience and suffering (which is perhaps the greater). But it is just as senseless to ascribe to a woman the same capability of bearing arms in the same way as man. By this fact complete political equality of

rights is excluded so long as this difference remains. To grant greater scope in public life than has been so far customary is in no way excluded, provided a form can be found which will suppress undesirable by-products. A very promising beginning, for instance, has been made in the civil law by allowing to the woman more independent control of her own means, especially when earned by herself. If we are yet unable to estimate what in this sphere the future may have in store, still less can we judge in advance as to the share to be given to woman in vocations hitherto closed to her. But, for instance, the limits of woman's capacity in reference to the doctor's calling are now no longer obscure, nor her special suitability for the profession within certain limits. Great difficulties arise on the question of the methods of her training for this end. But a 'will' will find a way, provided that this will is a good will, and that is in this case a will which recognises a special natural vocation. The cry for all-round reciprocal equality is in the mouth of a woman a self-degradation, because a self-forgetfulness of her own true value. For what she effects in the history of mankind is at least as great as all the glory of man's deeds. Genius itself has its bounds, which do not necessarily exclude the most homely of women or mothers; and the greatest of men have often declared that they owe most to their mothers. That undervaluation of self which is led astray by striving to be something more than womanly is only comprehensible on account of the overvaluation of themselves by men, who must more and more become convinced that their attitude is no very manly one.

In the transition from the family to the other forms of social life we meet with the remarkable historical fact that the family was once the centre of all other social activities, and that when these latter asserted their independent existence the stability of family life from which they originated was shaken; but at the same time they see the roots of their own life threatened by the dissolution of the family. The terms 'domestic economy,' 'law of the household,' 'housekeeping books,' 'family portraits,' 'the altar of the household' excite deep reflections. If labour and learning, art and companionship, law and religion are disjoined from the home, they are homeless, and make human

beings themselves homeless in all their knowing and doing, in their work as in their recreation, in their temporal as in their eternal interests. He who has not acquired in the nursery reverence for reality and a feeling for the beautiful; he who has not in the little state of family life learnt to value law and love; he who has not played and prayed with the father and mother at home—such an one is exposed to the temptation (each according to his power and position) to criticise all this particular sphere of joint human life, or some item of it, unsparingly; and to seek to alter it, now making too much of one point, and anon expressing contempt on another point; here unsympathetic and there unduly enthusiastic. The old limit of domestic life cannot be restored; but if anywhere, then it is here that the saying is applicable—Build anew and better.

It is indifferent in what order the various social fellowships should be taken after that of the family, inasmuch as they all stand together in a reciprocal relation of influence. Only those portions of our civilised life, above mentioned, comprised under sociology, science, and art must be taken by themselves. The State, the legally ordered community, has its right place either before or after these three. Most naturally before any of them stands friendship.

#### FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship is the enduring fellowship of persons such as enters into the very core of personal life. In this respect it is allied to the fellowship which belongs to marriage and the family life, but different from it because it is not conditioned by sex-difference and blood-relationship. This does not exclude the idea that it has its roots in elective affinity, and presupposes mental similarity and difference. Rather this is essential, for in their absence there cannot be friendship, but general Christian love or Christian brotherhood. It is a frequent and fatal illusion when it is supposed that all true Christians ought to be friends in the precise sense. In friendship too there rules the power of attraction of two natures mutually complementary. Hence the order arises: Brothers and sisters and relatives are given to us; we contract marriage on the ground of natural

sexual love ; but we gain friends by free choice. No one can say to another—This person or that shall be thy friend ; we ought to love our neighbour. And from this it is at the same time clear how dangerous friendship is between relatives of the opposite sex, just because the frontiers of sexual love can only be guarded by a purity and moral energy which most persons more easily imagine they possess than actually are able to exercise. On the contrary, the married pair ought and can be always more and more the best friends.

All conceivable common ends bind friends together. The End of ends can and ought to be sought for in all of them, and that is to experience somewhat of the meaning of that confession :—

So I vow'd,  
Since I might never cope with thee in power,  
That I would love thee with excess of love.—*Don Carlos*.<sup>1</sup>

Youth is naturally the springtide of friendship, for then the awareness of personality, and the desire for its completion, puts forth its tendrils, and is not yet narrowed down by the various aims of practical life. But just on that account it is true of great men at the summit of their ambition that “a little true friendship is worth more than all the mere respect of all men.” And not only have those true friendships of youth which have been lastingly preserved their special grace, but even those formed later, when the normal time of friendship is past, just because they required more moral energy to form them. In the larger circles of acquaintanceship, especially of the young, the true friendship of one individual for another is not only as regards themselves, but also as regards the corporate whole, the sole preservative against insipidity ; for otherwise those superficial persons to whom form, appearance, noise are everything get the upper hand.

The estimation and character of friendship vary with periods and nations. It has often been observed how in the estimate of the Greeks friendship surpasses marriage in tenderness and depth. For example, Socrates dying in the circle of his friends discovers

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Boylan, p. 3, Bohn's Standard Library : Schiller's *Historical Dramas*.—TR.



his tenderest tones; and Aristotle celebrates friendship as the highest form of personal intercourse. In the Old Testament the picture of David and Jonathan stands out prominently for the fineness of its psychological delineation, but its religious character gives it its most peculiar impress. Both ideals, the Greek and the Jewish, in the main reappear in the Christian Church; fellowship in all-sufficing faith, brother-love goes beyond friendship. Both the ideals mentioned are exalted into a higher synthesis in the special natural aptitude of the Teutonic character.

#### CIVILISED INTERCOURSE.

The judgment of Christian ethics on the three groups which have been already noted above as intimately connected (*cf.* p. 319), because they all refer to the mastery of mind over matter, whether in the department of pure intellect (science and art) or in that of the practical, in which sphere mind makes matter into its servant (industrial life, technology), was discussed as to its supreme principle when we had to define the relation of the Kingdom of God to earthly and physical things (p. 147 ff.). The complete ranging of the physical under the highest moral End nowhere else attempted, and the complete freedom of the physical nowhere else reached, are points now to be illustrated by the rich experience of life, and their applicability tested in these spheres. In them quite especially because these departments to be discussed are more exclusively concerned with physical nature than is the case with the family and the State. The supreme principle in question as to the value or valuelessness of all civilisation flows out of obedience to the mind of Christ. When we speak of obedience we mean it in the sense of a full following of Christ as He Himself would have it, and not merely external imitation. Whoever makes Christ into the foe of civilisation does Him as little justice as he who glories in all advance in civilisation as if this was the true task of His Church. 'For' and 'against' civilisation, 'for' and 'against' the world—these are watch-words which only have a clear meaning for those to whom the world and its civilisation are still their highest Good, and for whom the question as to the real highest Good has not received its Christian solution. Jesus exalts Himself and His own

people above the world, above all civilisation ; and so in the ordinary sense He is neither for it nor against it. For Him the highest Good is the Kingdom of God, and every soul to be saved in this kingdom is to Him more than the whole world. Whenever, wherever, however, and for whomsoever civilisation, knowledge, glory and might and riches and honour are antagonistic to the Kingdom of God—he only knows one attitude to civilisation, that of renunciation ; ‘no’ without limit or hesitation. But where the motto, ‘One thing is needful,’ is recognised, then obviously to such an one all things are the good gift of God ; and then such an one does not know of any gift whatever which does not bring its duty with it, and its work, which is to him something obvious. If these gifts were valueless, if they had not their importance for what is highest (although subordinate to the highest), they would not exist. For the world is God’s—His Father’s world. This faith is for Him an unreserved and trustful conviction, not an insecure opinion or a pious wish. Nor did His disciples understand Him to mean that He would form them out of the world into a separate order ; nor did His foes, or the indifferent, receive that impression from Him. Otherwise He would not have had the reproach cast on Him that He had less of holy earnestness than St John the Baptist. Certainly the world and its civilisation are not for Him the consummation of God’s plans, but rather “God’s kingdom and His righteousness” is such consummation. But both these kingdoms are one in the One God, and therefore both exist for the good of the children of the Father. To their faith nothing in this world is worthless. The new world for which they wait is not the annihilation of the present, but its perfection, its glorious transformation. Therefore, so long as it is the Father’s will that this world should remain, the citizens of His kingdom have in the world to aim at the righteousness of God, and so to prove their faithfulness that they may be counted worthy to be entrusted with the true kingdom. It is here amid preparatory conditions that they are to train themselves for the true kingdom. By what worldly arrangements, in what forms of labour, and to what extent—all this the Son of God leaves to the personal judgment of the “sons of God”

who are by their own free choice to follow the mind of Christ. He is anxious only that they should have no other desire than to have the "same mind that was in Him." And inasmuch as the danger is ever growing greater of thinking too highly of the value of this world's 'goods' and the work of civilisation, or of thinking too little of them, He has expressly warned His disciples that, of these two things, they are to guard against the spiritually dangerous overestimate of their value. Christianity, as is easily intelligible, assumed another external position in its estimate of civilisation when, contrary to expectation, one generation followed another, and each one was to be that in which at last the world would become Christian. It did not promptly discover that spiritual attitude towards it which is in keeping with the idea of Christ. The whole history of the Christian world is a history of the struggle of the best men to find this secret. It is certain that the mediæval Church did not reach that sunlit height on which Jesus stood, to whom in comparison with God's kingdom all civilisation was nothing, and yet to whom even the most unimportant things seemed important for the greatest of ends. Its faltering and uncertain attitude was not in keeping with His imperial freedom and His spiritual independence. According to the mediæval view, industry, science, art were allowable when they were so indispensable to human existence that without them it had no longer a foundation. They were counted as raw material for the Kingdom of God, *i.e.* for the Church as it then was. But civilisation was to it only really 'good' if it, as far as possible, served the Church's needs, or secured in some way the Church's stamp of approval. Our formularies are full of evidences of the still fresh wounds to conscience which such a faith inflicted on the ordinary man in the midst of real life. In such evidences we still participate in the first happiness of the new freedom. But we cannot say that no difficulties are now present with us; nay, we know that we must meet with them. And here that supreme principle is ever becoming clearer of the thoroughly subordinate but still irreplaceable value of civilisation for the Kingdom of God. The latest histories of missions afford inexhaustible illustrations. And as well for the whole of mankind

as for the individual person mastery over nature is indispensable. There is no vocation independent of civilisation, and in the absence of vocation, as we have convinced ourselves, there is no Christian fulfilment of duty, no ordered service of love. But even when we possess this insight the difficulty of its application in real life is always a growing one. Right down in the midst of every Christian heart to which the 'supreme care' is no mere phrase there is the conflict between civilisation and Christianity; the tension between the claims of the highest Good and of the social spheres in which it is realised; the question of conscience how we can approve ourselves as Christians in these spheres of duty. The question assumes a different colour in each period, and extends over a wide and constantly changing area. But in every period the same demand is made for the earnestness of personal resolve, which, inspired by the love of God, desires to love God with the whole heart. The great problem of all Christian ethics, its characteristic riddle, presents itself to everyone in a particularly urgent form in the question of the relation of Christianity to civilisation. This is doubly active in a time like our own, which to the superficial view of its enthusiasts presents a perfection of civilisation such as renders the Kingdom of God superfluous, and consequently turns those believers who have not penetrated into the deepest depths of the Kingdom of God into the enemies of culture. The solution of the enigma can only be found by everyone for himself by recognising that the answer is found in the attitude of Jesus Himself, which exists as an inspiration for His followers (*cf.* on Vocation).

This whole question of civilisation is plainly very closely related to that of asceticism. But the word civilisation turns our thoughts to the breadth of external life, asceticism to the depth of the inner personal life. Besides, asceticism applies to objects different from those which we call the blessings of civilisation. Apart from this, the one notion does in fact help to illustrate the other; and when one is understood in the Evangelical sense, the other follows in its train. As we recognise no mere self-abnegating asceticism, so we do not approve of hostility to civilisation on the part of Christians. And we can set up no general rules how far the Christian shall participate in



the labour of advancing civilisation or refrain from it, but must also leave it to his individual judgment, what his duty may be in individual cases, just as we denied in the teaching on asceticism that there is any such thing allowable as practice for practice' sake.

### *Work.*

More necessary than this allusion to asceticism is a general remark on the subject of *work*. For work has its original source in the human activity which seeks the control of nature, although we certainly use the word in a wider sense. Further, work is activity which looks beyond the present exigency. It is orderly and consecutive activity, and so work is the special glory of man, and can only be correctly applied to animals so far as their activity exhibits those qualities. What now is the ethical value of work? Plainly twofold. On the one hand, it is only by work that man becomes a full personality, for this is impossible without control of nature, above all of our own nature, and somehow nature external to us (both in inseparable reciprocity); and how can such control be gained without work? Of course there are diligent men (in a definite sphere) who still are not by this means Christian moral characters; but a lazy Christian is a contradiction in terms. And as without work that one leading principle of all moral life cannot be realised, so neither can the others. The fellowship of love, the services of love are impossible without work; evidently because he who has not become a 'person' in the proper sense can neither love nor be loved, and that for the reason previously stated. To this may be added that work associates men together in various ways, and sets them tasks of love so simple and at the same time so inexhaustible that the boldest imagination cannot think them out, in the home and school, in the village and in the manufactory. Work, too, paves the path of love; without the facilitation of human life which it affords, an infinite amount of energy now set free for the higher purposes of love would remain hampered by the daily battle for the necessities of mere existence. And most of all, without work we should have nothing that we could in love bestow on or receive from one

another. This at once makes it plain how work and property are inseparably connected. The proceeds of work, that which the personal 'I' appropriates to himself, this enlargement of the personal existence, gives to the individual life a larger content, and a wider opportunity for the services of love. Every developed faculty, like every external possession, can be and ought to be a means for these services and for personal growth. In the absence of all 'property' in this widest of senses man is a mere void in himself and useless to others. Because work has so great an ethical significance, it possesses some of that blessedness which is the inner reward of all moral action. The most humble labourer honours himself by industry. The dignity which belongs to work pales the greatest outward splendour of the indolent man, and, if he is not already morally callous, makes him feel the unworthiness and ennui of his existence, at any rate for the moment. For the Christian his work is the service of God, and the joyless care inseparable from all earthly labour, yet a part of its educational value, is glorified by the lofty thought of vocation (p. 112). At the same time that this Christian estimate of the value of work remains a true one, it keeps aloof from that exaggeration of its value which does not verify itself by the test of experience; which is an error often committed by the indolent, or used for the purposes of grandiloquent boasting. The type of the divine activity, one with repose, illumines the restless, eager desire for work of Christian humanity. It has no time for weariness, but has not merely in itself, but by reason of its unity with the work and the peace of God, the vision of an eternity which is therefore called "the sabbath rest of the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9 f.).

On account of special dangers in the Church of Thessalonica, St Paul found it needful to deduce from the great thoughts of the Gospel the above-cited principles in regard to the attitude of the Christian man to work and property (1 Thess. iv. 11 ff.; 2 Thess. iii. 10 ff.). Let it be noted how in the first Epistle the whole exposition is governed by the idea of brotherly love (v. 9; cf. vv. 10 and 11), and how the injunction "to give to him that needeth" is also subordinated to that end. In a quite similar way in the second Epistle the strongly emphasised

expression "his own bread" is correlated to the "working of that which is (morally) good." So that it is in no way true to say that it is first of all in Eph. iv. 28 that a moral motive for work is found. These principles are doubly impressive because they are written as a corrective of the existent pietistic contempt for work. St Paul insists that there can be no independence without work, since without it we are of no value to others; but there is not here any apotheosis of labour. In these words St Paul did but make an application in this department of what lay contained and ready for this use in the word of Jesus Christ that "he who is unfaithful in that which is least" cannot be entrusted with the true riches (St Luke xvi. 1). Jesus Christ, assured of His own incomparable vocation, is therefore a worker without a peer, ready to "work while it is day." Out of this has necessarily grown that new glory of work—even the work that is full of care, outwardly insignificant and apparently without result. The 'highest Good' does not present itself to careless luxury, but to the most diligent exertion. And because the highest Good takes all other ends into its service, these also are involved in any special exertion. To this Evangelical way of understanding Christianity the Roman Catholic view on this point stands in contrast. To it, earthly labour is the result of sin, or anyhow appears as something of inferior value (*cf.* Gen. iii. 19 with ii. 15 of laborious work). And so far as it recognises its value it is always in danger of finding its real end simply in the capability it affords of alms-giving, and even obscuring this idea by that of meritorious action. Still, much of this can only be made clear by turning our attention to the various social circles of civilised intercourse.

#### THE INDUSTRIAL LIFE.

This special form of activity is at present often called *the* social question, whereas we have felt it necessary to use the words social and socialism in a much wider sense, that is, as the antithesis of the individual and individualism (*cf.* pp. 145, 315 ff.); and, fitting in with that, have headed the whole second main division of Christian ethics with the title 'Social Ethics.' The

limitation of the word to the industrial part of the community is of itself an involuntary sign of the extent to which it has forced itself to the front. The same may be said of the term 'society,' when by this is understood, as is frequent, the articulation of human society according to economic differences, *i.e.* according to the differences in point of wealth. Taken by itself, the word 'society' has a much wider connotation: age, knowledge, art, law, religion, quite necessarily condition that articulation of the corporate whole into various groups, classes, status. But this new use of words betrays the fact that the industrial distinction has acquired a decisive influence. This revolutionary change is especially clear when we note that each group for a time predominant called itself 'society,' and ponder the fact that previously to the French Revolution only the nobility and the clergy, and not the citizen class at all, made up 'society.' Meanwhile, amongst us now all other distinctions are insignificant face to face with the contrast of wealth and poverty. If now the unregardful concession of this latest employment of the terms 'social' and 'society' is indicative of a false complaisance; and it is needful to remind ourselves even in this sense that "man lives not by bread alone"; there still lies in this fact a call to Christian ethics to seek to cast some clearer light on this form of society. The difficulty, of course, is as great as the necessity. And the difficulty lies as much in the nature of the particular social area as in the public feeling in regard to it—the former of these two inasmuch as a vast amount of technological knowledge is indispensable to a pertinent judgment; the latter inasmuch as the personal interest which enters into any explanation of such a question of the time has a disturbing influence on clearness of judgment. Even the difference of age and youth cannot be allowed to escape notice in such a matter, for not long ago socialist and anti-socialist was almost the same as saying young and old. Latterly the subject has become clearer, and people understand one another more easily. In any case, as on this subject of socialism the interest of Christian ethics now centres on ascertaining whether any inferences, from Christian principles, can be drawn on the questions of labour and property, in relation to the great social



question, and what those inferences are, we at once address ourselves to the point. In order to comprehend it we must, however (with all the reserve that our partial knowledge of the subject demands), draw attention to some assumptions of present-day economics.

*Theories of Political Economy.*

The professors of economics, of social or political or national economy—the qualifying words emphasise different sides of the one subject—tell us that the ‘Good’ in the economic sense is every natural product that serves for the satisfaction of any human need; in the narrower sense, anything gained as the result of labour, in contradistinction to the so-called gifts of nature, as light and air. If these are to be called free in the sense of accessible to all, all kinds of questions arise in connection with the great problem of the age, and of the future. Among the ‘goods’ gained by labour, a distinction again is drawn between those which are useful for the satisfaction of primary needs, and such as serve for the creation of fresh supplies for those needs, as machinery. These economic ‘goods’ must of course be produced, distributed, and used, *i.e.* production, distribution, consumption make up the industrial life. Clear as this series of concepts is in reality, the interworking of the various activities so designated is very complex, as may be shown by any of the simplest examples, *e.g.* the woollen cloth industry. The sphere of the industrial movement is, however, most clearly described when we note that this industry, in relation to the three points mentioned above, has, so to speak, its centre in the question of distribution, the share of each in what is produced. Demand in the last resort governs all—production, distribution, spending—and the whole social question is again before us.

First of all let us call to mind some fundamentals of these most general notions of the economic question. Human labour producing economic goods is concerned either with the (more or less) free gifts of nature, which in any case are offered by nature, as in hunting, fishing, mining; or it uses the processes of nature for its own ends, as in breeding cattle and in agriculture; or it shapes the materials of nature by independent manual labour and profitable manufacture. These distinctions depend on the

object of the labour, and in general correspond with the following stages—enclosure, court, village, city. In reference to the workers themselves, their labour is either such as involves initiative or mere execution, creative or mechanical, in all conceivable variety. It is important here to remember that the last-named distinction by no means always coincides with the difference between intellectual and bodily labour, because even the first may be a very wearisome business. Whereas what has been so far said refers to the form of production of economic goods, the supreme law of its development is termed specialisation and co-operation, or the subdivision and combination of labour. The more specific and universal needs ever result in more specialised work. Whereas once an artisan produced twenty sewing needles in a day, a machine, with fewer hands, whose work is purely mechanical, will turn out millions. But even so, all depend more and more on all, and mankind becomes a great industrial community.

All thus hastily said of production is true also in a similar way of the exchange of commodities. What a story, that of commerce, from the rudest barter to that of the Stock Exchange with no actual values exchanged! With regard to consumption or demand it may suffice here to mention that in sound conditions it necessarily governs production. But once more we see ourselves face to face with the exigencies of the present, in which we find huge quantities of goods offered for sale, for the use of which there is no failure as to need so much as in the capacity to acquire them. Is it the method of supply which must bear the blame? alone? or in connection with other causes? And what is our judgment to be on the reckless expenditure of private means in relation to that of a common right of possession? In any case, it is so far quite plain that all these forms and laws of the industrial life are not patient of simply being called good or evil. They may be as a whole good or evil; nay, more, they have become both good and evil mostly in such inextricable confusion as defies human insight. Let us for once not forget the sayings—"The way in which a man hammers in a nail, well or badly, has an ethical quality" (Schmoller); and, "Perfect thyself as an instrument, and wait for what place

mankind will assign thee" (Goethe). On the other hand, many now begin by desiring and expecting that society will find them a pleasant place, and think it ought to be content with a badly made tool. That is, we call to mind the principle which accompanied us out of personal into social ethics, that the good will is a power even when we discern clearly the limits of that power. But we do not mention this for the purpose of minifying the importance of the social question.

In the first place, two further concepts which follow from the above-mentioned fundamental notions require explanation. One of these belongs primarily to the question of production and the other to distribution of commodities. Both are watchwords of the social question of the day. The first is the notion of capital, the second that of the currency.

The critical word is capital. It has become a watchword, and its proper meaning is not always clear to all those who speak of tax on capital, profits of capital, productive and accumulated capital, capitalisation, and the war against capital. We must commence with the undeniable fact that the production of economical goods does by no means always depend on labour alone, but on the possession of free or worked-up products of nature; on the possession of machinery, and the space suitable for the work to be carried out. All these together, *i.e.* in the widest sense all economical goods which extend beyond immediate necessities for the production of new economical goods, are called means of production, and this is the full and plain notion of what capital is in itself. The possession of such means of work is obviously never equally distributed, and the access to them never alike easy to all. But apart from manual and agricultural labourers, who, in the main, only need a small amount of the means of labour correspondent to their capabilities, the relation in the actual world between capability of work and means of work has for the most part been that the possessor of the most—sometimes immense—means has stood on the one side opposite to the possessor of the capability of work on the other; and, in fact, in such a proportion that the worker has become completely dependent on the capital-owner, and has sunk down to the position of a mere productive machine.

The person of the slave is the property of his master, is merely a means of production, a portion of his capital, and merely a 'living machine.' The case of the serf is similar in this, that his capability of work does not belong to himself, but, at least in a certain measure, to his feudal lord, and in this, that he cannot free himself from this condition, but is *adscriptus glebæ*, bound to the soil; but different from the slave in that he cannot be sold like a chattel, but possesses certain personal rights, although greatly limited. If, therefore, we understand by capitalism merely the control of the means of work, and so of the capabilities of the worker, or, in other words, the control of the capitalist over the working classes, then slavery and serfdom ought to be called by this name. Slavery and serfdom were, we may say, forms of industrial life, but they were not industrial in the same way present-day capitalism is; if only because they rested on the basis of the subjection of aliens often as the result of conquest. Quite different from this is the case of the worker whose position before the law is that of equality with the owner of capital—the one just as civilly and politically free as the other. Everyone, for instance, is entitled to a vote for the representative legislature of the nation. But at the period when this freedom and equality in European nations was reached, the power of capital grew to a height hitherto undreamed of. From the fifteenth century to the discovery of the New World enormous quantities of natural products had been accessible; the spirit of enterprise of great merchants gained the control of these products by the use of capital of a moderate amount already acquired. "Fugger in Augsburg," as is said, "speculated with 10,000 ducats and gained 175,000 ducats." Then by the invention of machinery worked by steam these products were prepared in quite astonishing quantity, and opened up at the same time short and cheap methods of manufacture. "Everywhere machinery: it rattles on Pilatus, it penetrates the St Gothard, . . . it roars everywhere, it hums and creates. . . . The total amount of force present in the machinery of the present has been estimated at five milliards of horse-power" (Naumann). In this way the power of production and of capital grew perforce so great that



it gained the mastery of all human agents in production. Of course capital always needs these agents, if it is to produce new commodities; but the value of these human means of production does not increase in equal proportion to the possibility of production. And that just because machinery renders it possible to dispense very largely with human labour. Still more because mere labour, without the possession of capital, can do less for itself. Consequently it is largely growing more dependent, although the workers are politically independent persons. And so the most important index of this modern free unfreedom and unfree freedom, capitalism, consists in the complete recognition of the immense might of capital, the employment of this power to control the means of production. This results in the exploitation of the worker at the smallest possible wage, and the greatest possible exclusion of the worker from the profits of enterprise. The nature of this situation comes the most definitely to light in the fact that the owners of capital, by merely putting it into any enterprise, without any physical or mental exertion of their own, have their share in the profits merely because they possess it, draw interest—interest on undertakings in any industrial business; interest on investments in the narrower sense of money lent, ground-rents for allowing the use of land. In other words, the capitalist can employ his money for the purposes of work without working. And inasmuch as in the present economical condition of society means of labour are acquired by money, it is of course the case that its possession is an essential element in the idea of capital. And it has already been shown that capitalism, in the deep meaning, is closely connected with the general changes taking place in the whole mental life of the community. By this we mean that, when the Calvinistic assurance of salvation was a force in the industrial life in which men realised their calling to work and consciously valued capital, the spirit of Protestantism worked in remarkable unison with the ideas of general natural equality and freedom.

### *Money or Bullion.*

This reference to the notion of capital naturally leads on to that of *money*. Along with the idea of economic 'good,' i.e.

such as satisfies some need, that of value is given. The value of a commodity is on one side dependent, and on the other side to the last degree independent, of the individual judgment. The latter is true, inasmuch as many needs of human nature are common to all, and consequently the demand for them remains for the most part the same, as also does the quantity of natural materials and the labour expended on them; consequently also the price of them. This is of course true only within certain limits. At once the gravest difficulties emerge. In what relation are these factors to be placed in measuring their value? as, for example, how is the time expended in their production to be appraised, and can this be done? However this may be, in any case the value of these economical commodities, so far as they are not produced by everybody, is settled by exchange. The value is the exchange value, and commodities are called economical 'goods' in so far as they have any exchange value. The fixed value in exchange is 'price,' or the amount of commodities for which any other commodity can be bartered. To facilitate and shorten this exchange, and to render it fairer, some recognised medium of exchange is needful. This is money. Naturally, for this purpose only such substances will gain recognition as are always in demand, always of value, and valuable because found in small quantity, *i.e.* are rare; and such, further, as are easily transferable and therefore suitable for exchange. The precious metals have this property. No doubt the pleasure conferred by lustre and brilliance has contributed to this end, and so they have won the victory over shells and cattle as the recognised medium of exchange. By means of this convenient, easily and safely managed means of exchange, wealth, accumulated capital, has gained its full reality.

This evolution of the industrial life of which these briefly mentioned master-notions remind us is the originating soil of the social question.

### *The Social Question.*

It is rightly called an international question, inasmuch as its development is essentially similar in the civilised nations of Europe. Yet we may not forget the great difference in detail

both in regard to its pressure and its remedy. England, the home of modern industry and modern commerce, the mistress of the world by its machinery, its colonies, and its fleet, presented the most frightful caricature of civilisation in the thirties of the nineteenth century. It fell asunder "into two peoples, between which there was neither intercourse nor sympathy, who understood one another in their thought, feeling, and will as little as the inhabitants of different zones and planets, were educated in a different way and fed on different food, whose habits were different, and who were not even subject to the same laws" (Disraeli). As the statesman, so the poet judges. "The misery or happiness, weal or woe, beginning and end, existence, hope, religion of the poor!—rents, rents, rents (for the rich)" (Byron). Similarly the fine scorn of the 'Isaiah' of the century, Carlyle. Such a state of misery as Charles Kingsley describes in *Alton Locke*, and Dickens in *Hard Times*, existed in other countries only occasionally—starvation wages, houses unfit for human habitation, moral stupidity. But England has set an example also in many questions as to the remedy. It shows the superiority of gradual reform suited to varied needs, that is, by the activity of self-help on the part of the worker within the limits of the law, in contrast with the violent and radical revolution in France; while Germany is in advance of both in effectiveness of State interference. And yet it is just in this country that the Social Democratic party is not only stronger and better organised than in the countries named, but its ideal is international in the sense of national equality in a way that neither the English nor the French understand. And the number of its votes (1903, three millions) is undoubtedly composed not merely of the artisan class in the great manufactories, but of the lower orders of manual labour injured by those manufactories, and also probably of many of the discontented in other classes.

Social democracy cries out against the miseries of the present economic arrangements. The force of its complaint consists in the fact that those who utter it have the conviction that this complaint will grow into an indictment of the present order of things, and will issue in the promise of a nobler future. We note these three points—the complaint, the indictment, and the promise.

*The Socialist's Complaint.*

The *complaint* has reference to the economic position and to the social situation created by it. As to the economic situation it says: Wages are too low; work too long, and unsatisfactory in its nature. The lowness of wages is elucidated by the fact that only three-tenths of the inhabitants of Prussia in the year 1899 paid taxes on more than 900 marks income (£45 sterling). From this circumstance conclusions may be formed as to the character of the dwellings—that is, in great cities—and the general style of living. Still, many refer to the rise in wages as above what the depreciation of the value of money would account for, and point to the millions spent in alcoholic drinks. Many more point to the uncertainty of all such calculations. The complaint as to too long hours of labour might—apart from admitted exceptions, which scarcely at all apply to the larger industries, but to charwomen's work and the like—possibly have greater and more justification along with the complaint of the deadly monotony of the work, and moral stunting, when the compensations of family, educational pursuits, and recreations fail; that is to say, along with the complaint that man is degraded to a machine. This position, unsatisfying in itself, it is further said, is still more unendurable by the uncertainty of employment, and the absence of prospect of improvement in one's situation. The former is the result of crises in trade, and the latter arises from the fact that a worker who belongs to a particular class can seldom raise himself out of it. The complaint extends beyond the range of the industrial community. Different classes no longer understand each other; the chasm grows continually wider. And in fact there are (it is said) at bottom only two classes, called the well-to-do educated persons and the uneducated—in truth, the rich and the poor. Gold, they say, not only purchases pleasure and honour, it glorifies stupidity; while there is always more wit in the poor man's pouch. The greatest contrasts of past history are trifling compared with this 'either,' 'or.' To this is added the growing awareness of this chasm following on the abolition of the restraints on personal freedom; on the broader education given



in elementary schools. The people are educated as if with the design of rendering them more sensible of these difficulties.

So long as they are regarded as unavoidable they are easier to bear. The complaint to which we lend an ear will, it is thought, become an *indictment*—an indictment of the prevailing economic order; an indictment against all the social groups which are connected with those arrangements, as the rulers and the propertied classes. Not that these persons are to be charged with the guilt of these anomalies; for those who represent them are, it is said, themselves under the law of industrial evolution. But when once the causes are known, it becomes their duty to find a remedy. Capital in the sense above mentioned is declared to be the great evil from which all this misery arises, the dominance of the means of production over the producing power of the people; more especially the accumulation of this capital in the hands of the few instead of belonging to the corporate whole. In this latter case a fair access to the means of production might be afforded to all who are willing to work. That is, capital as a private possession is regarded as an evil. This is the simplest and also the clearest way of putting it. Other statements of the same subject, after having been of service in the agitation, and valued as weapons in the warfare, have with more gain in knowledge been lately given up, although unwillingly. As a particular instance, ‘the iron law of competition in wages.’ It has been declared to be a necessity that the wages paid by capitalists are always close to the minimum required for existence, and, in spite of all trifling variations, only amount to so much as just suffices for the needs of the worker. If any speculator enters on an enterprise when labour is cheap, and afterwards can only obtain it at a higher rate of wages, then those who are thus fortunate enter into marriage, and the greater supply of labour thus created is the cause that the price at which ‘hands’ can be secured goes down because the supply is greater than the demand. The untenableness of this theory has made it necessary to set it aside, as well as the supposed equally well-established theory of Malthus, closely connected with the former, on the increase of population in geometrical proportion,

while the means of life only increase in arithmetical proportion. But the weight of that great grievance against private capital is not lessened because greater care has become necessary in regard to watchwords of that sort. And this grievance turns with special energy against the various social groups of the present time built up on such a foundation. It is said that family life is undergoing dissolution—the crèche at the bottom, and at the top the nurse. And in fact the family life of the upper ten thousand is, it is asserted, a seat of moral corruption and the home of all evil social prejudices. The State, under the influence of the propertied classes, say they, makes laws entirely in their favour and is the “muzzle of the have-nots.” And the Church “preaches cream and gives skim-milk,” “offers a dose of opium to the burdened,” and so the proletariat has turned its back on it, and left it to the rich, who are favoured by it as they are by the State. For whatever may be thought of the well-known axiom that “Religion is a private affair”—neither meant in a diplomatic nor a scornful sense in and for itself—the awful fact is quite certain that the socialistic masses are estranged from the Church.

What picture of the future can we draw on the dark background of this complaint and impeachment of the present time? Righteousness not only demands generally that any statement of it should be kept free from all bias, but that a careful distinction should be drawn between the economic ideal of socialism and its theory of the universe. It is conceivable that the latter is not bound up with the former, yet keen-sighted observers have debated whether the social question is really one of a theory of the universe or a question of the means of existence. But clearness of statement and of judgment is rendered extraordinarily difficult in regard to the economic ideal by the various and partially contradictory theories of recognised leaders both in respect of what they demand and in the way they consider it may be realised. Whereas at first revolution was considered to be the only certain way of bringing in the new era, and was unreservedly advocated (‘Tremble, Canaille!’) before the laws on socialism were passed, now the number is increasing of those who are advocates of the idea of gradual improvement of the conditions

of life, and, accordingly, of participation meanwhile in the tasks of the present. Both these views change about in the lips of orators according to the need of the moment. But if we ask, What is to be the content of this great future? then not merely do many reject the utopias of individual enthusiasts—and when opportunity serves make use of them—but frequently, and with an air of superiority, brand them as signs of the ignorance of their advocates if opponents ever urge questions as to the character of the end to be aimed at. For the development, it is said, is to be continuous advance in all directions, according to a programme set forth. Clearly this latter assertion is itself unscientific. Insight into the carrying through of an idea in all its details, and insight into the possibility of its realisation, are ideas easily mistaken for one another. Bismarck's proposition that the politician must not play Providence, and can only form his conclusions from a view of all the elements that exist at a given moment, was valuable just because the aim of his political action stood luminously before him, and he had closely examined all the forces available for its realisation. But this deficiency in definite aims for the future does not in any way detract from the seriousness of the democratic movement. For many this want of clearness makes it all the more dangerous, and to count on its ruin because of the variousness of individual opinions found in one camp would be foolish self-deception on the part of its opponents.

First of all, then, what is the economic demand of the socialists? It is threefold, and purports, according to the official programme of the party: the conversion of the means of production (capital) into the common property of society; the regulation of all work by a co-operative community; the application to the common use and the just distribution of all the products of labour. We see that this demand closely fits in with the above-mentioned master-conditions of industrial life, if these are considered under the point of view of the control of capital over labour. The master-notions there mentioned of the production of commodities, the circulation of them, their consumption, are all included in the watchword, 'Regulation of labour.' But the decisive idea is just this, that the means

of work (capital) and the products of labour, and so, on that account, the regulation of labour, belong to the corporate whole, and ought to be regulated by it. Thus the question of the distribution of 'goods,' under that all-dominating point of view which we made clear when dealing with the 'complaint' and 'indictment' spoken of, is answered thus:—The means of production (capital) is not to dominate the power of production (labour), but the latter is to prevail, for "labour is the source of all wealth and civilisation."

Misconceptions and misunderstandings, even among those who are well-meaning, have attached themselves to all the three sides of the one demand, which must be disposed of before an opinion can be formed of it. In the first place, it is wrong to say that the Social Democratic movement is the foe of all capital, instead of saying of private capital; or, in agreement with that idea, wishes to set aside all property; or that property is robbery, instead of—private property in all the means of production; or, that it desires an equal division of the private property now so unequally distributed between individuals, instead of—it desires that all private capital should be put together or placed in the possession of society. It is true that these rejected interpretations of the proposals do prevail in many minds confused by the agitation, and often enough to the vexation of the agitators; and particularly was this so at the commencement of the movement. Consequently it is difficult to gain clearness of view as to where the allowance of private property is to begin, and private capital to be disallowed. But it is the duty of prudence, as well as of justice, to take all such misconceptions for what they are worth. For instance, the amusing idea often put forth with oratorical adornments, that if a partition were made to-day, then to-morrow the diligent man would be ahead of others. In spite of its essential justice, and in spite of its value, too, for many social questions of detail, such an idea does not belong to our present context. It is a misconception or misinterpretation of the *second* portion of the demand to say: Social democracy wishes to leave the regulation of production to various small groups, perhaps to the commonalty. It knows well enough that this would mean the annihilation of present-day civilisation.



It thinks, on the contrary, of its regulation within a nation, nay, even of a combination of nations. Certainly commerce, in the present sense, so far as it is connected with production by private capital, and, with it, money in its intrinsic value, would of itself cease, at least over a wide area. Finally, it is a misinterpretation of the third point if it is said: In the division of commodities produced all will have equal share, and all will get just as much as they really desire. The programme, on the contrary, insists, in manifold and varying expressions, over and over again on "the universal duty of work, by equal right, and to each according to his reasonable requirements."

If now these very last words are plainly open to question as to whether they express any clear meaning, certainly the two first points demand a critical estimate. But it is a help to clearness if this question, whether they are capable of realisation, is distinguished from the other, and examined first—Supposing this question is answered in the affirmative, is it probable that then there would be such a quantity of commodities available as would ensure to each person an essentially greater share than under present conditions? With every consciousness of the limits which beset the mere layman with regard to such difficult problems of political economy, he may not be debarred from noting the fact that the exponents of the new economical order rate many items in their account surprisingly high—for instance, the gain to the community by the abolition of military burdens, of the national debt, etc.; others are put astonishingly low—for instance, the consequences of the essential curtailment of the hours of labour. In the agitation speakers talk of from two to three hours' work a day. Are the savings made in the one direction and the deficits caused by the other to be seriously estimated so high? to say nothing of the cessation of the spur to individual effort which lies in the prospect of immediate needs. And is not the wealth of nature in general overestimated?

Still, these interrogatories do of themselves partly lead to the examination of the three principal socialistic demands. Plainly, the first is easier of serious examination than are the second and third. For the unlimited accumulation of capital

in the hands of individual persons has long been felt, even in circles that are not Social Democratic, to be a danger to the corporate whole. Many accumulate merely for the sake of the power their property confers, and not in order, at least at the same time, to produce useful commodities for others. This danger it is sought to meet by such devices as a progressive income tax, death duties, delimitation of the right of ownership of the soil. And the objection that special laws of this sort are an attack on the rights of property is considerably weakened by the quiet reflection whether it is not perhaps merely an overweening idea of private rights that is assailed? and in what way the right of the corporate whole may be reconciled with that of the individual? But then production not by private capital but by that of the community is not merely a possibility of the future, but an actuality. This is the case with (continental) railways, municipal supply of water, light. But of course the unlimited extension of such modes of trading in the production of commodities could plainly only be conceivable and desirable if all commodities were produced best in a wholesale way; and this has by no means as yet been proved in reference to agricultural products and much manual work.

In still less degree has it been successfully shown, even approximately, how—in relation to the second point, that the community as such is to take the lead in production—the demand for commodities is to be calculated and their manufacture is to be carried out, and on what principle work on the materials supplied is to be assigned to each. In fact, the latter point might be regarded as an insuperable difficulty, unless we are to suppose a complete change in human nature. But this is to admit the fanciful character of the whole demand. It is true that freedom in the choice of a calling is a very limited one under present conditions, but even when these conditions are presupposed, much may be done to enlarge it and to improve the conditions. But when it is said that the official representatives of the body corporate will assign to each his place in the great framework of the future state, we see that this is inconceivable, without the divine omniscience

of this central controlling power, and must involve the enslavement of those who are under this tutelage. It is also inconceivable how, without the most extreme coercion, the necessary industry required from each is to be secured. It has been correctly said that this army of labourers of the future cannot be governed without a dictator, unless, in ways not now known, the community may in the use of its collective forces be brought to aim at that which is needful alike to the body corporate as to the single person; as is now done in a certain measure, taught by necessity (the hard taskmaster of human progress), and by the much-ridiculed old morality.

As far as the third point is concerned—the division of commodities—such watchwords as ‘use of them for the common public benefit’ or ‘according to the natural needs’ have been, in part even by their originators, recognised to be what they are, phrases. We should really like to know how the use of commodities for the public benefit can be reconciled with the claims of individuals, and what the natural needs are of those persons. Reward in proportion to achievement is certainly the ideal, but the question is how to realise it. To measure work done by the time occupied would plainly be unjust. The objections to all the formulas hitherto attempted, even to that which purports to make the average value of a piece of work to the community the standard, may all be comprehended in one statement:—As soon as the standard suitable to a particular single case is thought to be applicable, then such serious concessions must be made to scouted individualism, by paying regard to the special case of the man concerned, and the particular situation, that in fact the principle of socialism started with is given up. It is consequently only too intelligible how these difficulties lead many exponents of socialism to the anarchist communism which they at first strenuously repudiated. Such difficulties do not afflict these advocates. But even at the price of giving up the ordered collective life of man, the ideal is in any case only asserted and in no way proved to be possible. Some communistic ditties demonstrate the lowness of the ideal, as, ‘An equal share of all will please us.’ But on the other hand there are others who keep themselves consciously aloof

from this strong programme; quietly or openly utter one catch-phrase after another, such as the 'iron law of demand and supply as ruling wages,' or the 'solidarity of the proletariat' and the 'break-down of society founded on capitalism,' and even invoke the great goddess herself as 'the science of economical evolution as the single factor of the whole of human history' ('Revisionism'). This brings us to the fundamental theories of social democracy.

For the sake of clearness and justice we separated the economical ideal of socialism from its philosophy of the cosmos. At various points the one position touches on the other naturally, as, for instance, where reference was made to the forces which are supposed as the basis of the society of the future; also when speaking of the power of evolution which is to lead on to that future, and on the impeachment of the present social order, the guilt of which is not guilt in any proper sense, but simply the necessary consequence of the evolution of the present order. Now, it is needful to realise to ourselves what lies at the back of this economical ideal. It is insisted emphatically that the whole question is one of a new cosmic theory. The demand made by social democracy is confessedly put forward in the name of *the Science*, the absolute science of which it is the sole possessor. How deep is the feeling behind may be shown by the fact that in popular songs homage is paid to this science, and the cry raised against "the tyrant"—"the youthful giant of the fourth estate, with knitted brow." "In blind amaze he stands when science opes her store." All the old statues of the gods, say they, lie on the ground, while science holds the throne. What sort of science is that? In ordinary life nothing but a hotch-potch mixture of contradictory portions of the old civilisation and the new ideas, "the most unblest half-education the world has ever seen," "a vulgarised science." The intelligent leaders are not like this. Its view of the universe, unique in itself, has been called the materialisation of history; that is, the idea of a spiritual development as Hegel once expounded it has been transformed by the leaders of the movement, under the influence of the Darwinian hypothesis and that of science generally, into this



materialism. The innermost core of all development, as it says, is the economic evolution of society and the evolution of morality; science, art, religion merely its consequences. Even the representatives of hated capitalism may take shelter under this idea of necessitated evolution. They too are its victims. But if by the inner necessity of this industrial evolution capitalism has now dug its own grave, by the same law of necessity a new science of morality will arise. It will at the same time be a richer substitute for the self-delusion of religion. The reasons of its origin are now seen through; but these reasons have now for ever disappeared. We have no need here to examine the core of this cosmic philosophy, either as to the concept of evolution itself, or that of the economic hypothesis which asserts that this is the single determining factor (*cf.* p. 39 ff.). It is, however, important to note, at this juncture, that this cosmic hypothesis is in no way new, as is sometimes conceitedly thought. The turn given to the hypothesis in the assertion that social evolution is the governing principle is certainly new so far as it has never before been so recklessly and one-sidedly asserted. But because the evolution hypothesis is in the main only a general formula, capable of the most various statement, we can comprehend, by examining these statements, the most surprising fact, that the social democratic theory of the world is, not merely not new, and at the bottom not even social, but curiously enough so much like that of its bitterest opponents that they may be easily mistaken for one another. According to it men are naturally equal (*i.e.* individual men); equal in their natural propensions directed to the same end of seeking their own welfare. From their natural propensions of self-love, benevolence under the guidance of reflection, calculation, and a will that is free and naturally good there proceeds a prosperous condition of society, and a general happiness based on civilisation. We recognise these tones. This is the hedonistic ethics of the so-called 'natural right' to happiness, which has received this name because a supposed equality of natural endowment forms the starting-point of subsequent difference, apart from history (*cf.* p. 34).

But these are the principles from which the opponents of

socialistic economics start. This is the foundation of their idea of 'leaving the world to take its course' and 'giving free play to natural forces' and the like. The difference between the rival views is that present-day socialism, after the essential error of such theories has received fearful proof, now wishes to help the personal life by putting all capital in the control of the corporate whole. But other assumptions intrinsically different are not put forward. This supposed corporate whole is only the sum of the persons composing it, and these are individually the same with those above described, with no deeper powers, or higher aims; satisfied to claim 'rights' and indifferent to 'duties.' There is no thought of society properly articulated, or of a humanity with a great history and a sublime future. When the problem of economics is solved, this solves all others, and that because for it no other problem exists. In short, the poverty of the idea is merely concealed by the dazzling word 'evolution.'

How much of this science of socialism is conscious knowledge possessed by the exponents of its watchword, or really effective, it is difficult to decide. Its effectiveness often enough consists in its critical element and battle-cries, and in many cases its materialism, so easy of comprehension. It is underneath that these same men often enough exhibit power of self-abnegation and of self-sacrifice on behalf of their ideal, confused as it seems, which might well shame us. The question whether this is not the power of the Gospel unconsciously working in them leads us to the examination of what is the proper position of Christian ethics to the whole movement.

On this point it is only possible to speak plainly after having—apart from any reference to the present social question—previously made clear what the Gospel view is on the question of industrial labour. Only in this way is it possible for us, in the current of the movement, to judge whether we are in position, without self-delusion, to bring the light of its simple truths to bear on it. So much that is false or only half-true has been said in the name of the Gospel, that such a doubt ought clearly to be put to the test of examination, and if at all possible set at rest.

## THE JUDGMENT OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS ON ECONOMIC QUESTIONS.

Provided Christian life is a coherent whole illuminated by a great light, the *general truths* which bear on these points can only consist in the application of those with which we made acquaintance in the sections on work and property (p. 348). The sphere of industrial labour and the property produced by it in the form of external goods is complicated enough to require such explicit application.

Here too Jesus stands above the two extreme views, in the support of which appeal is made to Him—that of the enemies of industrial labour, or such as only work because driven by necessity; and that of the orators who make it into a god. In the Romish Church (p. 353) the state of nature and state of grace are just on this point made to appear as two entities intrinsically alien to one another. Accordingly, private possession of earthly goods is regarded as something not proper for those who are perfect, and, for the ordinary Christian, needing to be sanctified by alms-giving. The ideal condition of property is a community of goods; its historical example is that of the first Christian community in Jerusalem. This picture of the early days of Christianity floats before the eyes of many Protestants, in obscure outline, as the goal of their desire. They do not clearly see that what was possible then under special and limited conditions for a short time, was in no form introduced by St Paul into his Grecian missionary churches. They often overlook, as well, how strongly the voluntariness of that communism is emphasised; and even by a false concession to communistic opinions forget Luther's saying: "Those said, 'What is mine is thine'; these now say, 'What is thine is mine.'" Still the undervaluation of labour is not compelled to express itself in far-away visions of a community of goods. It takes a remarkable form at the present time in Tolstoy, in his glorification of manual labour and his contempt for the more highly developed civilisation. For this it cannot make appeal to Jesus. He makes no such trifling distinctions about work. He calls His disciples away from the net as from the 'receipt of custom.' He takes His parables of the Kingdom from all sorts of vocations, does

not regard one as holier than another, and promises the reward of work in the highest calling of all. Free Himself, he only suffers freedom to be bound by the Father's will, in all other points as in this; certain that all are able to do that will.

But of course just as little—when we have regard to individual sayings, nay, still less—does He pronounce those to be in the right—why is at once plain—who think all is going excellently well if only work and trade are peacefully progressing, and the ‘ordered social conditions’ are not disturbed. He applies even to these worshippers of custom and devotees of assured property a higher requirement, that of ‘the treasure in heaven,’ for which no sacrifice is too great. And He knows how it really is that wealth is the hardest of fetters, as well as the last needing to be broken off; how hard it is for the rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven; ‘impossible to man,’ to him who is rich or is determined to be so. He sees how easy it is for the rich man to be without love to his neighbour, and to be in unbelief without love to God, of whom he apparently has no need. This is why such a one has treated his property, which is for the highest Good, as Mammon, a false God. Accordingly He sees that many poor are more receptive for His riches (St Matt. v. 2, vi. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 17 ff.). But all who are poor are not in His kingdom because they are poor; and He received the rich, without taking their property from them save when its sacrifice is required as a proof of earnestness, as in the case of the rich young noble (*cf.* p. 225). St Peter has his own house in Capernaum (St Mark i. 29), and the whole Epistle of Philemon is a protest against the opinion that there is such a thing as a Christian law in regard to property which necessarily arranges its measure and asserts its rights. “To have as though one had not” (1 Cor. vii. 29), is the Christian demand. The Apostle claims independence in want and superfluity, and to be a Stoic of a higher order and so not a Stoic—“initiated into the mystery” (*μεμνήμαι*) of rising above earthly property at once by enjoying and forgoing it. In this too he was the servant of the Lord who “had not where to lay His head,” but was not either an anchorite or a beggar; who uses the goods of this world as they come to Him; has a common chest for the immediate circle of



His disciples; defends the 'waste' of Mary; and thus is the rich Son of the rich Father. Nowhere is there narrowness or triviality, but everywhere freedom in the service of the Father. Even that beautiful and wise saying of the Old Testament (in Prov. xxx. 8), of the "food convenient for me," contrasted with "poverty nor riches," does not rise to the height of His attitude. Nor does He lay down a law in favour of the golden mean in property. Therefore so many questions which an earthly sense would put to Him glance off from Him and pass on. He is no judge of an 'inheritance,' but he does not abrogate work, property, inheritance. The notion of property for its own sake certainly has not for Him the dignity which it had for the people of 'the law.' God is the great proprietor, and we are His stewards; but it is right to be faithful in the least, so that we may be entrusted with the true riches. In short, it is as always when the 'one thing needful' and the 'many things' of this world stand before His gaze. His attitude to industrial labour is the same as to all that is peculiar to civilisation (*cf.* p. 349). He is neither 'for' it nor 'against' it. He is above it, and hence in it as no other is; unreservedly 'against' it if it seeks to usurp the place of the highest Good; 'for' it, so far as it originates with the Father in heaven and is used in His service. Hence the opponents of civilisation and fanatics wrongly claim Him as on their side in this special point too; now praise and now condemn Him without reason. And it is only he who allows Jesus to raise him to the same level as that on which He stands who comprehends His meaning, and that such factitious antitheses are no part of His thoughts. For His kingdom is not the kingdom of this world, and His Father is not the God of this world; and just as little is He opposed to this world, according to the common idea of this world, whether it is that of the godly or the ungodly. He knows the Father, and He is the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth.

Such principles are binding on every Christian, provided the word of God is to stand good. He who has not the spirit of Christ is none of His. And with the conviction of the obligation of these principles there is assumed the possibility of

carrying them out under all conditions, however various, by the poor as by the rich; by both, whether in the first or twentieth century. Only the way of carrying out these principles, as of everything that is truly the will of God, is committed to the dutiful choice of each. Is that now intended to mean that the Christian ought to have no decisive attitude towards the great social question of our day? Is it right in the flood-tide of 'Christian socialism' for a little band of independent men to proclaim that the Christian in the name of Christianity has nothing he can demand from public order beyond the liberty to live in his own faith? No doubt justifiable in relation to innumerable obscurities of the momentary fashion, yet there is a very simple objection which besets this proposition. The Christian ought, as has been impressively rejoined by its exponents, to live out his faith in love, and so become 'salt' in the life of others. Certainly. But this activity of love at once meets in actual life with the most difficult economical problems. If we reflect on Luther's attitude towards the forbidding of usury in the ancient Church, can we say that the scrupulous care with which the Christian world of to-day disposes of this is founded on clear Evangelical conviction? The view, of course, may not be so very difficult (although often taken too lightly) that "lending and taking nothing in return," in the true meaning (*cf.* St Matt. v. 42), is neither fulfilled by the Churches' forbidding of usury, nor by destroying the possibility of taking it in the state of the future (*cf.* p. 119). But it is impossible not to recognise that the necessary development of industrial life brings with it a mass of difficulties in the management of money, in relation to which the difficulty of a decided opinion on the part of the Christian man is a fearfully hard one. This is the case not merely with the merchant and the contractor, but for everyone who is involved in ever so quiet a way in this vast world of business. As to the duties of the wealthy, Carnegie the millionaire has lately written and urged his fellow-millionaires to expend their wealth in benefiting mankind, not perhaps in the form of some charitable institution after death—weakening their sense that they cannot take their treasures with them—but by prompt expenditure of their superfluity,

themselves as fellow-workers and not mere enjoyers of their substance. And over wide areas the judgment gains increasing currency that the private gentleman, living on the interest of his capital, whether he has little or much, is no less a parasite than the tramp. But the Christian is not able to judge thus without taking close account of the mass of anomalies in the social order of the present day; and for him this means, without feeling that he is under obligation to endeavour to reduce their number—just for his own sake, and even still more for the sake of others. For if he groans under those anomalies in spite of the strong counterpoise of his faith and his love, how much more others who do not know either faith or love? On his part he is to help in securing for others the blessing of work for themselves, that they in their turn may do the like for their fellows. But for this he is incapacitated in the absence of some judgment on this great question of the day.

We are not to consider it merely as an economic question. That the materialisation of history of which we have spoken is unchristian, is at once just as clearly seen in Christian ethics as the mistake of supposing that it is the promise of a golden time without heart-renewal. The proper answer, however, cannot be brought out of isolated passages of the Holy Scriptures, but must be deduced from the briefly presented Christian view of the broad principles of labour and property. This at once puts one consequence beyond doubt. Neither pure socialism nor pure individualism in economic life is Christian. For in the thought of the Kingdom of God individuals with the community, and the community with its individuals, are bound together into a unity and into a freedom which far transcend the mere predominance of the individual or of the community at the cost of one or the other. But pure socialism or pure individualism does sacrifice either the one or the other (p. 143 f.). Both endanger personal independence and the true union of love. The first especially endangers independence, and the second chiefly love. But in fact both independence and love are endangered, for we saw that we can be of no service to others unless we are a whole in ourselves, and the freest personality in the absence of love is poor

and empty. At this point the question, not always clearly put, may be answered—May a Christian be a social democrat? The question has in the main a sense open to a general explanation only when all that is purely personal is excluded, for here as everywhere the statement is applicable—Each must for himself give an account to God. Consequently the meaning of this question cannot be, whether and how far a Christian ought to support the claims of social democracy which he, if only generally, recognises as a justifiable means for a justifiable end, but rather whether he ought, for the sake of such demands, to belong to the Social Democratic party. On this his conscience must decide (*cf.* p. 381). But if the question concerns the main principle of economic socialism, and if this main principle is clearly grasped, and thought out in all its consequences, then there can be no doubt that it is to be answered negatively, and on the ground stated—the independence of the individual, without which he is of little value either to himself or to the community, is essentially sacrificed, although under the present perplexing conditions there is many a one who really by this devotion to this communal ideal—fundamentally injurious to individuality—does become a personality for himself. For instance, a workman who, by his savings for the party funds, for the first time learns to make a personal self-sacrifice for an ideal. Only this fundamental decision is undeniably in agreement with the other assertion—that pure individualism is unchristian.

Is it possible to put these negative statements more definitely? Very probably in this way—an individualistic economic order with a strong socialistic stamp on it corresponds to the Evangelical master-idea of the relation of the individual to the corporate whole more purely than the converse possibility. That follows from what has been said before of the importance of the individual in the Kingdom of God, and this application of the idea pressed itself on our attention when we dwelt on the practicability of the 'state of the future.' The Christian must value the improvement of social conditions as an urgent task, but he cannot, even in the economic sphere, give up the supreme and frequently emphasised principle that the improvement of individuals more certainly leads to soundness of social conditions



than that this soundness of conditions tends of itself to make men good. Hence a certain reserve is imposed on Christians—not a reserve in benevolence, but caution in the matter of flattering partisanship for the cause of the poor. Jesus was not the prince of the proletariat, and tax-gatherers were certainly not the ‘poor’ of His day. Only of course there is always the reverse danger near.

But in the application of these principles to the wealth of life we find ourselves warned of the need of the greatest prudence, not only by the undeniable want of success which has attended even the well-meaning work of amateurs, but by the knowledge which all may be supposed to possess that in a sphere so especially perplexing there is little promise of success in the absence of the closest knowledge of history and of present-day life, and even less promise than in other departments. By this judgment the general claim is not affected that there ought to be the opportunity of work for those who are willing to work, and that sufficient wages ought to be assured to the worker—sufficient wages not merely for in some degree guaranteeing his physical existence in health and in sickness, but also for the furtherance of his intellectual and moral development (family life, education); in fact, a wage the scale of which shall stand in as close a relation as possible to the utility of his work. To this end the community ought not to allow the unavoidable conflicting interests of individual persons or of social circles to become a selfish battle of one against another, or of single classes against other classes; but ought to shape them to such ends as concern the good alike of the individual and the community.

But what ways lead to these ends Christian ethics cannot of itself form a judgment. It can only give utterance to its well-founded conviction that many things which are to-day considered impossible will be found practicable. It does this, taught by history that many an apparently unimpeachable ‘right’ has disappeared when it plainly grew into a wrong. And it can feel encouraged to honour in such changes the triumph of the ‘Good,’ *i.e.* of the love to which right and law are indispensable and sacred servants, but still servants. So

much the more will such alterations be rich in blessing, the oftener they are called forth by the moral conviction of the propertied classes, and are not mere anxious concessions to the exigent masses.

But perhaps it is still a task of ethics to try to realise by whom such reforms are to be set in operation. In this as always the appeal must be to the individual. It would often be cheering (if it were not often saddening) to see social reformers in personal intercourse with others among all parties. People dispute and debate over the future of society, and let the moment slip in which, by saying a prudent word or doing a kindly deed, the present condition of society might be improved in their own circle. Nay, it is a new task of the first order, set for us by the new conditions, how in the huge manufactories of modern life, personality, the personal whole, independent, matured, can assert and perfect itself; and it is not only a weak but a false complaint that this personality has no longer place in our time. But it is to misconstrue facts when everything is made to depend on the individual, and a mistake to seek to depreciate the value of the duty and power of social groups to make attempts at improvement and advancement. Face to face with such enormous tasks, the individual is not in the position to help on radical improvement unless a divinely commissioned leader sets the example of action, and constrains others into his service for the good of all. Among social groups naturally that of labour takes the precedence. It is in the first line called to remove industrial hindrances. On this a distinction emerges. The worker oppressed by the hardships of present-day labour plainly stands in a different position from the proprietor. The former is at once summoned to a battle for the improvement of his status. But in what form, in what measure, that again is a matter belonging to his personal conscience. Severe inner struggles may be his lot just because the external battle for the improvement of his status is associated with so much that is dreamy and unjust. But positively, along with his vocation as a worker he has another calling, that of freeing his position from the limitations which are in danger of rendering it no longer a vocation in the proper sense. If we

reflect on this, then we shall no longer consider that judgment against strikes (as a weapon in the struggle for more wages) which for a long time passed current in the name of Christian ethics, a reasonable one; without in the least going beyond this to glorify strikes in the way usual with many. The other party in this great economic struggle represents moral worth. Real progress is most surely guaranteed by the spirit of honesty, justice, social utility, by which both parties may and ought to be inspired. It appertains to those who are economically the stronger party to be ready to render possible for the weakest what is purely impossible for them by their own strength. For instance, as a set-off to mechanical labour, improvement in the conditions of family life, higher education, and as the basis of this better dwellings and surroundings. It is one of the brightest rays of hope that the last-named task is ever more and more regarded as most urgent. Many incidental and aimless streams of beneficence might find an ordered course in this great work; and this will happen when society gains the clear conviction that there here stands before it a simple, long-delayed duty; and has made the discovery that the common notion of charity is itself a mere pillow of content, and is at once the product and the source of self-deception. For it is only when one has begun to fulfil the duties of righteousness that genuine Christian pity unreservedly attends to its proper and never-ending service in a province peculiarly its own.

The Christian family will ever continue to be the most successful school of duty for both. On the field most easily surveyed, with circumscribed tasks, in the years when sensibility is the keenest, the truly social disposition must be cultivated which alone will guard in later life against all charity becoming a mere soulless piece of business. In the degree that this quiet home of all efforts to be put forth on a larger scale is cherished, science and art may succeed in doing their part in bridging over the social gulf. A novelist like Dickens poured 'oil and wine' into the wounds of the oppressed, and smote the oppressors at the same time with fiery strokes. And he also shows that neither the pathetic skill of literary art nor illuminative science can soothe the hunger for life and love in

the unhappy masses ; but only the message of life which springs out of the fount of love, in fine, from the eternal love. That is to say, a credible and worthy common faith must bind high and low together, if all the bridges that ingenuity can build are not to be finally destroyed.

The way to a common understanding as to the tasks to be accomplished by the State at least begins to be made plain. These are, protection of the weak and care for the feeble, by such methods as those of which a foundation for future effort has been laid in the German systems of insurance laws for workers—the first finest fruit of the newly united empire, although widely condemned by those for whom they were designed ; juster laws of taxation ; colonisation abroad, and home colonies and the like. Alongside this, and coincident in origin—although yet more a matter of future prospect than a present reality—is the recognition of the full right of organisation of labour in forms profitable for the whole community. Such recognition is the surest way to destroy the delusion that it is the duty of the State and in its power to do everything, and a summons to all the slumbering forces of the world of labour.

It is notoriously a question much debated whether the *Church* should be called upon to render direct help in the social exigencies of the present, and especially whether this is its proper province ; or whether, as a matter of principle, it is only called upon to indirect effort, particularly by the performance of its proper religious tasks, and in this way render all the more powerful and practical assistance by influencing the dispositions of all those who ought to be socially active in the circles in question. It is not difficult to understand that the Roman Church takes the first-mentioned view. Its conviction is that as a church all questions generally, and therefore also this question, can be settled by its treasury of supernatural truths and gifts of grace, and by the discipline as well which it carries out in the secular sphere through the State at the Church's instance (making a virtue of necessity) ; and in its religious orders it has a well-schooled and thoroughly well-disciplined army for the social crusade (*cf.* the papal encyclical, 1891).



Naturally, in the Evangelical Church of Germany those incline to this ideal of ecclesiastical social activity in proportion to the emphasis which they lay generally on the fact of its establishment by the State, and their judgment on the matter—therefore, for example, their judgment on the Church Social Conference on the one hand, and on the Evangelical Church Congress on the other hand, which represent both these views—will depend in the end not on their different attitude to the social question but on their Church views. It scarcely needs to be said that the real difference of conviction goes down much deeper than such examples from a rapidly changing period would of themselves serve to indicate. Perhaps it is well that both tendencies should be separately suffered to show what they are able to accomplish. It would not be difficult to determine historically which line of thought comes closer to the original idea of the German Reformation. In no case need we ascribe to that view less social energy than to the other, when it regards the task entrusted to the Church, in proper Lutheran fashion, from the point of view of the ‘Word only’; the ‘Word,’ of course, applied in its encouraging and illuminative power to all difficult problems of the day, and of proved efficacy for things high as for things low. But it is as little inclined to the idea which tends in the other direction of helping by “fighting shoulder to shoulder with the oppressed” through an organisation after the manner of a religious order, and denying to start with citizen rights in the Evangelical Church. (*Cf.* the attempts of the High Church party in the English Church.) Both lines of thought may in their final statement be one, that the Gospel is the only force which can make us ‘social,’ that is capable of sacrifice; while the mere insight into the relation between the good of the individual and that of the corporate whole only produces a ‘socialism of prudence.’ Whatever one may consider to be the duty of the Church, such is that of the individual clergyman, save that here the scruple against direct participation steps at once into a clearer light. For everyone will allow that in the main the clergyman should not be a party man. Plainly the individual conscience must draw the line for each person. But any passing pronouncements of ecclesiastical

authorities ought always to be framed from the Church's point of view, simply because these authorities will otherwise be drawn into the uncertain course of the ship of State, to the injury of both Church and State.

In any case, whatever opinion may be formed on these matters just discussed, the social question is of such complexity that it can only be brought nearer to solution by the co-ordinated efforts of individual persons and of the social circles concerned, that is, by self-help, by neighbourly help and by that of the community at large, the State and the Church. Science and art must be summoned to aid. But the help of God, which is effectual in all such troubles, does not, provided we admit the witness of the Gospel, guarantee a heaven on earth. Every solution creates a new question in this earthly development; behind every height scaled there looms a new horizon. Nor is this merely a result of human sin, but belongs to the very nature of this material development. Conflict of interests, progress and regress, are essential factors. In the midst of this conflict God's peace is the guardian of faith and love, but this peace points beyond the battle-fields.

#### SCIENCE AND ART.

Civilised society comprises both the industrial life already discussed on the one hand, and science and art on the other. It is plain without saying more that the industrial department has to do with the mastery of nature, practically and technologically, by the human intellect, and art and science with the ideal appropriation of nature by the human consciousness; the former grasps the objective world, the latter enriches the subjective world of mind. It is less clear and not unattended with danger to suppose that both these departments of art and science are apprehended in their unity and distinction when we have designated them 'knowledge'; science as the knowledge that is general and universal, art that which is special and individual. For the very expression 'feeling for the beautiful' is in itself a protest against subsuming art under the category of knowledge, or 'knowing.' In both regions, art and science, there

distinctly emerges the difference between the minds that lead and create and those that are receptive and impressible, although the boundary-line between the two is most certainly fluctuating, because every personal acquisition results from imitation.

### *Science.*

In its nature science is the conscious and coherent search for the knowledge of truth; that is, for judgments universally true, compelling, and illuminating. In regard to subject-matter, it is divided into physical and mental sciences, into pure and applied (practical or 'positive') according as they are pursued for the sake of knowledge alone, or at the same time for the solution of a practical problem. But these distinctions do not affect the great end, the knowledge of truth. The labour directed to this end is by associated effort, for no one person is in himself equal to the task. The great medium of exchange is language. This fellowship in knowledge is on one side of it informal general intellectual intercourse. That is, without express design knowledge in various subjects spreads with immeasurable rapidity from one to another; from one circle of cultivated society to another; from nation to nation. Men live in a common intellectual atmosphere. The great currents in this mental atmosphere are set up by the literary works, which are the products of the inquiring intellect. The daily press is active in propagation, popularising in a way often shallow, reaching the most remote villages. The power of the press is great precisely because it is in a position to use its influence in the form of unfettered intercourse in a way that is not possible for any organised formal school of instruction. Inasmuch as the outward form of entire freedom is preserved, the 'gentle reader' yields himself as a slave to tyrants who force on his attention the wants and views of others, which often enough have grown up out of the soil of wasted lives. But still an incalculable amount of what is useful, true, and good is in this way diffused. In the main both these statements are true of the so-called secular as well as of the Christian press. 'Schools' of instruction imply a formal fellowship of knowledge, whether as between teacher and

scholar from the elementary school to the public school, or as between literati in their mutual intercourse in philosophical or scientific societies. German universities cover both; that, in addition to their functions as collegiate institutions, they invite to learned independent research, constitutes their power and their weakness.

The judgment of Christian ethics on science does not admit of being initially stated in a short formula. In the Holy Scriptures are found words in praise of human knowledge alongside earnest warnings; and these latter predominate. "Not many wise are called," "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" One of the chief charges made by modern ethics against the Christian system is, in fact, its supposed depreciation of human knowledge; and we saw that in wide social areas 'Science' is the one (often unknown) god, to which men offer sacrifice after crumbling all other altars into ruins. But the Holy Scriptures assert with particular emphasis that the Gospel is the 'Truth'; the Christian is exhorted to "seek after the wisdom which is perfect"; and they candidly recognise all that interests the human mind—and that not merely in the Proverbs of the Old Testament; for the New Testament also is far from that intentional contempt for knowledge which has been a matter of glorying in the name of piety in some periods of the history of the Church. If we look more closely, this aversion to science rests on a twofold ground. For one thing, "knowledge puffeth up," the cultivation of the intellect is thought too much of. Thus 'knowledge' appears in opposition to 'faith.' They mutually influence one another. Knowledge is overvalued in its significance for the individual because too much or everything is attributed to it; and the reverse. Knowledge has in fact done so much that it is supposed nothing is impossible to it; and how much more comprehensively is that true of this than of any former generation! It is only when there is clear insight into the nature of knowledge that it is possible to pronounce a clear judgment on its value. In other words, the proposition above previously given, that the mark of true science consists in the enunciation of 'universal judgments,' needs closer inspection,



How far do such generally valid judgments, such as each person of sound intellect must acknowledge, reach? Do these only exist in that sphere of perception determined by the 'laws of thought,' or do they extend to such questions as are related to a theory of the universe? Do not the latter rather rest on the concurrency of reasons of a quite different sort from those which are sufficient for the intellectual part of our nature? Have not will and feeling a justifiable share in all our final convictions as to the reason and purpose of the world?—justifiable precisely because otherwise a real conviction could only be attained by the gifted and educated. So that in ethics a statement at once appears to be obvious, which in investigations busied merely with the nature of knowledge easily produces the impression of a mere attempt to escape a difficulty. In short, it is the highest task of science to know itself, recognise its own legitimacy, to examine the limits which naturally belong to it, and to turn its criticism on itself. Until this work is accomplished the Christian judgment on science must ever remain uncertain. It will at the same time both be in conflict with it and highly value it, fear it and yet have confidence in it; and as long as this obscure relation subsists, there will always be religious men inclined to keen enmity to science. The history of the mediæval Church as well as of modern Protestantism offers numerous illustrations. Too much is conceded to inductive science, unproved in matters of faith; and then arbitrarily enough a special 'higher' province is assigned to 'exact' knowledge, and then faith, conscious of its original might, revenges itself with illogical invectives against 'godless reason.' Now, to our thinking Kant so took in hand that greatest of scientific problems, the investigation of the nature of cognition, 'the Critique of Reason,' that only the superficial student can ignore its results. But it is precisely on this point that it again appears clear how the grand final questions are settled in the holy of holies of the human heart, and therefore not in one way for the educated and in another way for the uneducated. However clearly the limits of 'exact' knowledge are defined, it is still a matter of personal resolve whether a man will take this insight into these final questions seriously; whether he will cast

away all fancy, and see that his true honour consists in doing his duty. Is scientific knowledge my highest Good or the Good-will? This is in this place the chief question; and that saying, "Whoever will do His will," finds here a new, unique application. The whole real importance of the present point comes into a clear light when we note that the warning against the "knowledge that puffeth up" was said in the first instance to Christians of their supposed knowledge, and has since received ample justification in all forms in the world of pietism. But it is indispensably needful to battle against vanity and paltriness in the learned world, and often most indispensable at its highest levels.

Supposing this main question is properly settled, and thus the nature of science really known, and the limits which this nature imposes; and if this knowledge is taken with true religious earnestness of mind, then Christian ethics can scarcely go too far in the recognition of the moral value of all genuine knowledge. Knowledge makes the personal spirit the lord over nature, and only by such mastery is a man fitted for the fellowship of love, for loving and being loved. And the importance, in particular, that belongs to the knowledge of God and of His ways in history, and in the most insignificant life, has been repeatedly insisted on. Here we need only allude to missions—the best men in every department of theology, the best expositors, historians, systematic theologians, and practical divines, would be barely good enough for this mighty task of announcing the Gospel to fresh nations in fresh languages; but it is precisely here that we see true theology is inseparably connected with all science. True and real theology. If that main question is properly answered, then all knowledge wins the freedom befitting its nature. The sublime word of Job (xiii. 7), "Will ye speak wrongfully for God? will ye talk deceitfully for Him?" is understood in all its depth. The freedom of the children of God is freedom, too, from any inclination to find fault with the truth; to prescribe to God the way in which He ought to proceed in the kingdom of nature or of grace; to settle the way (for example) in which He ought to have fashioned Holy Writ. Faith assured of God's existence reverences God's almighty wisdom in all that is real and offers to us real know-

ledge. Faith is the mainspring and motive power of this. And where absolute loyalty to truth seems to demand what to our human weakness is a sacrifice involving our most cherished ideas, it is faith that gives us humility, patience, and hope. Every act of renunciation becomes to us the gain of closer intercourse and fellowship with God. In the unlimited obedience which can do nothing against the truth, faith perceives that it is linked in hope with those who have been martyrs for truth other than that which is distinctively Christian. All alike live to the God of truth.

This spiritual attitude of the Christian to all forms of knowledge renders him capable of a tolerance which far surpasses all that usually bears that name. Faith which does not really understand itself has often done dishonour to the true estimate of what the faith really is by blind fanaticism; tolerance as the general attitude of public opinion and the usage of the State, has often been inspired by mere antagonism to the representatives of religion. But it is only true faith that has the power to avoid the danger of all such tolerance, the danger, that is, of acquiescing in each believing what he chooses because in the last resort every form of truth is equally good—that is equally hard to prove. This is the paralysing effect of that great truth that a philosophy of the world is not deducible from exact science. But in Christianity this consequence is intrinsically impossible, because it founds faith on the revelation of the good God (*cf.* above, p. 60 ff.). And it respects this faith as a personal secret which excludes all judgment on others, and as that which constrains its possessors to win men by unwearying love. (*Cf.* all that has been said on the basal idea of Christian ethics.)

#### *Art.*

Christian ethics has only very slowly arrived at a judgment on art in keeping with the special character of the subject. This hangs together with the difficulty of an accurate definition of art. For there are many explanations that are as unintelligible as they are worthless. “Art is concerned with a form of mental pleasure through the channel of the senses;” “Art

is a complex of sensuous impressions through which a feeling of harmony arises," and that because it goes beyond immediate reality. Certainly, but how far, and why? Perhaps we may the sooner obtain what may be needful as a foundation for a judgment, if, instead of entering into the conflict of views, we let those speak to us who were themselves great artists, and tell us what their idea of art was. Schiller says: "Everyone who has the power to put his own emotional condition into such objective form that this object compels me by an inner necessity to pass over into the same emotional condition and so powerfully affects me is an artist—a maker. . . . But it is not everyone who is in the same degree eminent. That depends on the wealth, the contents of his mind which thus find external display, and on the degree of the 'necessity' with which his work produces that impression on the mind." And Goethe says: "The greater the talent, the more decisively does the image that is to be produced at once take shape at the beginning (of each particular artistic effort)." Therefore the question is one of an *emotional condition which is so presented to the senses that this sensuous presentation* again calls forth that same emotional condition. Any such imaging work we call beautiful. The means of perceptual presentation may be very various—form, colour, sound, word; and the various arts are distinguished accordingly. But the common and decisive feature is the sensuous presentation of an inner experience. How decisive, we may know from the fact that the measure of artistic power is the measure of the power of calling forth (by the 'necessity' in the above sense) the same emotional state, of compelling a sympathetic response. Inner experience alone does not make an artist, nor of course the power of representation in the absence of an inner experience to represent. Both inseparably belong to one another. To be sure, it has been recently maintained, in the justifiable demand for realism in art, that it is simply the representation of nature itself (and so the illusion called forth by this means) that essentially makes up the nature of art. But when the exponents of this opinion praise the saying, "Art is a bit of nature, seen in a particular mental mood," they silently admit what they attack



when they use that phrase, 'mental mood.' In this phrase there lies what we have above asserted. No one has yet seriously declared that a mere accurate representation of a bit of nature is for itself beautiful; it must be a piece of nature specially conceived, 'ensouled' nature. But because there are many who have much artistic feeling without being able to represent it, it is right, when considering the nature of art, to bring this ability, this power of sensuous representation, into the forefront; and that in respect of its subjective reason, the imagination, the power of mental intuition. A psychical event assumes a physical form; the subjective feeling gets free play and becomes objective; a mental movement reaches rest. This whole explanation would be incomplete without explicitly emphasising the point from which we started, that such a representation of emotional condition offers itself to the contemplative feelings, awakening the emotion of pleasure and gratification. Art is pleasurable even in the form of the most moving of tragedies. It involves no immediate impulse to action. Hence the question, the decisive point whether the represented object is real or not, is a matter of complete indifference for emotional pleasure as for the knowledge of truth. Pleasure in its sympathetic contemplation is its only purpose.

It is easy to add the supplementary consideration that those simple ideas are just as true of the beautiful in nature as in art. It is in nature that we find the emotional content of human life, and it is in art that we embody its forms; but in every case the characteristics above mentioned come into question. It is more necessary to note that while every perfect sensuous presentation of an emotional content is beautiful, yet where there is an equal completeness in the representation of the higher emotional content this marks a higher æsthetic level. There is a realm of the beautiful, a unity amid infinite variety. The complete expression of the highest content of human life in an artistic synthesis would yield complete enjoyment of art. Each period stamps out its own content peculiar to it. And if there is a considerable amount in each age which all men of every age can contemplate with like sympathy, especially much that is common to human nature everywhere and at all times,

yet this common element does not represent the whole content of life. For instance, the classic art of Italy is not the whole of art. And even art in this age of machinery is still art, real, and having its own character, influenced and enriched by this world of machine production which at first sight appears to be the very antithesis of art.

In the *community* of those men who direct their attention to æsthetics, a difference is manifest which was stated previously when we were dealing with the nature of the beautiful. It is one thing to have a sensibility for æsthetic beauty; it is another thing to produce the beautiful. In both respects there is an infinite gradation of talent down to the most deficient ability. The difference marks out either the professional calling or the mere taste of the amateur, whose real calling is to do work in other spheres. It is often a difficult task which the teacher has to perform, to lay stress on this distinction, for a person of moderate ability soon believes himself capable of being an artist; and he who has the true calling easily deludes himself with the idea that there is no need for hard work. Great artists, however, have pointed out (*cf. Wilhelm Meister; Richter's Life*) that such persons are the very ones who stand in need of the discipline of redoubled diligence, and give utterance to it in a witty word with a serious meaning, that *Talent is diligence*.

A special and often undervalued form of the æsthetic life, both of that which is receptive and that which is productive—but neither of them in the form determined by vocation—is that of companionship in pastimes which is called ‘play’—in the narrower sense meaning the diversions of childhood. Social forms and even the fixed (yet within certain limits ever-changing) fashions of dress and society manners set forth the fact that companionship is a kind of ‘play,’ as the mould of social intercourse. Social intercourse runs its course in the form of ‘play’ in the wider sense of diversion. Conversation is an intellectual pastime, in which the mental store of each is used for reciprocal enjoyment, incorporating itself in lively word and suitable gesture. Many a one, to whom the terms art and æsthetics have all his life been unknown, may even on the lower levels of culture be an artist by using his conversational powers for his

own and others' pleasure with his own natural originality. Besides the pastime of conversation there are other social diversions. Whoever would object to them must prepare to deny that there is any ethical justification of those recreations which form the immediate end of companionship. But it is for this very reason that we must say that they have moral value as far as they are real diversions. And it is not merely those forms of diversion that have an intrinsic value that are justifiable, however true it is that a man of worth will prefer them. Games of chance for the purpose of gain are inconsistent with the idea of recreation, and are to be reprobated on account of their inner unreality. Gain and work are connected. Hence many hurtful results arise from the gambling spirit. Perhaps it will seem inconceivable in a not very remote future that any State should so lower itself as to constitute itself the banker of a lottery. Those lotteries which have the serious purpose of aiding some venture of art, or have a definite purpose for the common good, must be differently judged. Still more surprising will it seem that gambling hells, run by individual speculators, were not long ago swept away by a storm of public indignation.

If there has long been some uncertainty of opinion prevailing amongst Christians in reference to diversions, there is still more in regard to the exercise of art as a calling, and the pleasure connected with it. The aversion of the ancient Church was not confined to the many openly immoral productions of the art of the period. Among the arts, poetry and painting were the earliest recognised by the Church. Then there was a long period when all art dealt with religious subjects only and bore an ecclesiastical impress. In the Evangelical Protestant Church the older pietism regarded the whole region of artistic beauty as a dangerous one for him at any rate who would take his religion in real earnest, and as better avoided. For such a one joy in the Holy Ghost is only conceivable as joy in religious subjects; and even the representation of these in art easily disturbs their purity; but still the exceptions of the simplest poetry and music were allowed. The exclusion of these two arts from the service of religion was precluded by Col. iii. 16. Of course this passage and that of Philippians iv. 8 both give the impres-

sion that they require a far more unfettered interpretation, and at the same time a far wider application. Reference has often been made to the profound sensibility for the enjoyment of nature which shines in many sayings of Jesus Christ. Still, such several utterances do not suffice to prove that æsthetics was in principle recognised. For it is undeniable that this whole field of human mental activity is not prominent in the Holy Scriptures. This statement is not altered by the appeal to the Old Testament, its Temple and Psalter, or the vision of the New Jerusalem and its glory. Ought we on this account to say those are right who regard professed Christianity and professed enmity to art as identical? It would be better for us to try to conceive what the reasons were for that undeniable reserve; for then we shall not only understand why, as a matter of fact, that enmity arose, but also be able to judge whether such a view has a real foundation in the nature of our religion.

Reflection on the nature of art passes with spontaneous ease on to the question *why* it is that the sensuous presentation of an inner emotional experience gives such special exaltation, such pure pleasure. The Neo-Platonists spoke of an eternal element in art; Schiller, of an ethical element in 'form.' Doubtless art stands above the tormenting questionings and contradictions of our life. The objective and the subjective, nature and spirit, are not in accord; knowledge is limited, the will crippled. But art assures us of a life in the eternal; here otherwise insoluble problems are resolved; 'it knows no breaks'; the soul finds repose, is at home. Hence pleasure in the beautiful has been often called 'finding salvation.' But even when this noblest term is used of the yearning for artistic enjoyment it gives rise to a great questioning. Is it the highest salvation which is attainable by man? In short, art steps into rivalry with religion. Can it possibly be a substitute for religion, for a humanity which has outgrown religion?

It is indubitable that in this relationship of art and religion there lies the intrinsic reason why the Gospel at first appeared to be so indifferent to, and inclined to be inimical to, the world of art. Art does not ask after reality; the splendour of illusion is its province. In religion reality is everything;



the more unambiguous everything belonging to it appears, the higher it stands; it is wholly and entirely ethical. It refuses to throw a shimmering light of glory on evil, least of all on guilt. To it sin is real, and forgiveness just as real. To bind such religion with art without limitation, even were the union only temporary, would be its death; it would itself become a splendid illusion. And art would carry off the victory just because the splendour of illusion is its own specialty; its reality of illusion is more powerful than the reality of religion when this latter is not taken with unreserved earnestness. The solution of contradictions in art, her reconciliation of opposites, has in it something fascinating; it offers itself to immediate experience of enjoyment in its embodiment of the spiritual. God seems distant, doubtful; the beautiful present, realisable, the only divine thing that can be experienced—of course only within our own selves. When we reflect on the power of such ideas at the present time, in spite of so long and deep a Christian history, then we understand what the danger was that threatened Christianity on a soil from which art and religion had simultaneously sprung in indissoluble union. In addition, since art is in its nature the sensuous presentation of the non-sensuous, the temptation lies very near to make the sensuous its sole content. Art that is not true to nature is artificiality, not art. ‘Naturalism’ in art is a deliberate preference for that view which is even regarded as the only valid one, that “the natural propensities are the ground of all human action, and even of the highest ideals.” And since this lower nature naturally lends itself most easily, convincingly, and seductively to graphic representation, art often becomes in periods of moral decline the chief handmaid of lust. Lust subdues art to her service, and thus helps forward her domination over continually wider spheres. Her language is only too easily intelligible. Immoral culture becomes by her means accessible to the uneducated.

Let us, however, not forget what a powerful impetus to higher things art can give, for the same reasons and in the same way; often where no other means of culture will reach so quickly and surely. In this way we arrive at a Christian ethical judgment on art, befitting the subject. We have no new idea to bring

forward for this purpose; but this is merely a proof that there is no exclusiveness in Christian ethics. We have only unreservedly to carry out on this ground, apparently so unsafe, the great thought so often emphasised. The will ought in freedom to be subject to the will of God. But God is love. To be loved and to love is the highest destiny of man. He is to have no other gods but this God. But also there is nothing in heaven and earth which does not minister to the purposes of God's love, and among the ministering spirits before this throne art is one of the noblest. Why? The answer is clear from what has been said on the nature of art. The 'Good' must shape itself in outward form, and, provided it is really divinely good, in perfect form. But what is truly good is truly beautiful. But "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Until then the beautiful is a deceitful illusion if it poses as that which is final and supreme; but it is a prophecy which hastens on to fulfilment for all who "hunger after righteousness." Art does not delude the Christian into the belief that there is no real unity and synthesis of contraries. He is not the victim of any such delusion, because he knows of a real synthesis of which he now has experience. And art is to him a presentiment that this real reconciliation which he already experiences in faith, and which is worthy, on the ground of faith in its operative power, of being mentioned at the same time, will one day be experienced not by faith merely but by sight. In short, that famous saying is true, "The good includes the beautiful," and must some way reveal itself as the beautiful. Hence the Christian religion has never separated itself from all art. Jesus graphically presented the invisible mysteries of the Kingdom of God in parables, the kingdom of the future and the kingdom that now is. The power of the sacred picture and of the religious hymn cannot be measured by human calculation.

Yet it is not a mere question of religious art. "It is not what is painted, but how it is painted, that is of importance." Not that the subjects are indifferent (see above), but here too there is a rich gradation from the inconsiderable to the very highest. But the secret of art depends on the artistic power and style in which an idea is embodied. The most common-

place picture of daily life may deeply move us, when a sublime theme may leave us cold. In the perfected Kingdom of God even the smallest thing will be irradiated by the light of eternity, and of this art gives us a glimpse. And again, just as the beautiful artistic forms which are the product of human genius affect us, so is it with nature itself in its divinely fashioned beauty. This is in very fact the teacher of art. In the demand for truth to nature the spirit of truth is manifest in spite of all aberrations. There is no need of multiplying words to understand from this that the main requirement in all art is that it ought to be chaste, the pure representation of the idea to be embodied, without any ulterior motive. By this, in the most disputed part of artistic representation, all that is lascivious, as all that is prudish, is excluded. Every creature of God is good, and to the pure all things are pure. Even the human form has its divinely designed beauty, but the Christian too is not blind to the lurking danger. In days of excited public debate on the morality of art both parties alike fall into misunderstandings. The Christian desires not to lose the liberty with which Christ has made him free; and he is careful about allying himself with those who make everything into a serious Church question, and is alive to the danger of mental slavery. He is just as little able to chime in with the jubilant songs on 'free' art in which he discerns no really pure tones. He is mindful of the need of protecting unstable youth. He asks himself whether all the contributions of all the arts are national in regard to our German feeling, in harmony with our nature and our history. We cannot give so prompt an answer as is sometimes desired to all the old famous 'school' examples. The theatre as the home 'of the festal enjoyment of art' for the people he cannot condemn unless he wishes to condemn art itself. He is not, however, able to conceal from himself that, as a matter of fact, the theatre has often become the home of mere superficial and vapid amusement, just precisely because true works of art are not the staple of the performances of plays, but too often the light wares of the mere speculative playwrights—whose methods of advertisement often remind us of business firms—trading on the low public taste. To this it may be added that a host of moral

dangers of all kinds are inseparably connected with the present methods of management. Hence those who are in no wise narrow-minded judges do not recommend the choice of the actor's vocation under existing conditions, unless in the case where someone possesses a quite special histrionic talent conjoined with moral stamina, and feels that all these difficulties may be overcome. Some will go a step further and will have us think it proper to call it unworthy of an earnest Christian to visit the innumerable small playhouses which are the opposite of institutes of art. The strict conscience shows itself in this to be rightly sensitive; while the mind not infrequently finds a pure joy in some really artistic production. The verdict on dancing must be of a similar kind. It is unimpeachable as a natural expression of social pleasure, and especially in the society of one's own home. But again the actual way in which the amusement is often arranged, the importance assigned to it, and the continual dissipation of thought in it ever re-awaken the old doubt, even when all dourness and hypercritical fault-finding are excluded, and clear Evangelical principle is not infringed.

From this subject it is quite especially impossible to pass without calling to mind in the most emphatic way that each "must be fully persuaded in his own mind"; and "to his own Master he standeth or falleth." General rules are here particularly valueless, because at bottom impossible and even unethical. A reflection generally applicable is that art, simply because it is in itself something divine, can with double ease become godless; that each must decide for himself whether and just how far this daughter of the skies can be to him a guide and prophetic. It is without doubt that many ought to remind themselves that æsthetic, in the wrong place, at the wrong time, in undue degree, may be the most serious foe of morality; and if they have any questioning 'either . . . or' they ought to act up to the principle of St Matt. v. 29, certain that at the right time the life attained by the sacrifice of life will be the more glorious. For that which is 'Good' and that which is 'beautiful' are not for ever separated for anyone. Some are armed against one thing and others against another; some are led in one way and some in another. But to 'live only for art' is



impossible for anyone without injury, except for the artist, whose vocation it is, to whom, like every other earthly calling, it may and ought to be his preparation for the heavenly. To the danger of thinking too highly of art, a certain witness, to whom no suspicion can attach, points when he says: "Young man, note betimes when thy soul and mind are in a state of exaltation, that the Muse knows how to follow but not how to lead" (Goethe). Thus as a form of special social intercourse various pleasures have been mentioned, and there here naturally follows a short treatment of the question of companionship.

#### COMPANIONSHIP.

The word companionship may need some explanation. Essentially it can only imply all moral intercourse in human society as a community of persons who live in the reciprocal interchange of the thought, feeling, and experience, whatever these may be, peculiar to each. Regarded from the point of view of its fundamental principle this relation includes the whole ethical sphere. Of course we speak of human companionship in distinction from the herding of wild animals. Also it would be possible, when using the word companionship, to confine it merely to the outward form of such intercourse in the way it is regulated by social usage. But the use which is common and meant here is different from the one or the other of these, and inasmuch as the latter is, so far as is needful, clear, we only need to mark it off from the former. Put briefly, it is much narrower both in purpose and content, in form and range. The immediate end of companionship is not the service of love so much as enjoyment, pleasure, and refreshment, though of course such pleasure, provided it has its justifiable place in Christian ethics, must be subordinated to the highest moral end. Accordingly the content of companionship may include all and everything which is not really immoral; but it is not, in the first line, consciously religious and moral as such. And its form is not serious work such as our calling in life demands, but action which represents itself artistically, and that not as part of our serious vocations but as a diversion

(*cf.* 'Art'). In its range, companionship—although it has its centre in the family relationship—stretches purposely beyond the family, and so far as it is at the same time subject to limits, those limits are different from those which mark off intercourse that is, properly speaking, ethical. The intercourse of companionship extends to other persons besides those with whom our moral vocation associates us. In short, companionship is in all the mentioned aspects freer, and not intercourse limited by our calling. But in all these aspects plain dangers threaten companionship when it stretches its proper claim to freedom too far. The highest end may never be denied, and the highest content never excluded; form and content must not be in antagonism to the highest end and content; nor may its range be unlimited. For example, companionship that will be nothing unless religious is unnatural, and may easily degenerate into vulgarity; beginning in the spirit, it may end in the flesh. The conversation of those to whom art and nature appear to be trivial subjects, when all religious material is exhausted may take the form of a more eager interest on the subjects of money and property. Yet friendship in which the deepest earnestness is despised becomes vapid. The surest indication of soundness lies in the simplicity with which conversation may, without any artificiality, pass from the commonplace to the highest subjects, and from the highest back to the commonplace. Hence the rule for what is right, the unerring test, is whether it hinders our prayers. Of course this too, as everything else in Evangelical ethics, can only be apprehended by each person in his special position.

This principle is again so far true of the amount of recreation permissible. With this principle many content themselves, because they like to escape the need of forming a personal resolve in harmony with duty. In general, that which is obvious enough may be said, that the concept of recreation excludes the idea of strain, and cannot be regarded in the light of duty at all. The usual 'obligations of companionship' are of course largely neither obligation nor companionship, but so called when there is a need to extenuate some unfortunate doings. But the individual himself ought to measure out the boundary-

lines of his recreations. There are sober natures to whom that is real enjoyment which is, and rightly is, to others a torment as dereliction of duty. Neither let us forget that companionship is not our sole recreation, that nature and art raise their quiet claims which may not be disregarded, although it is certain that he who pays attention to these alone curtails the moral demand, to which demand all recreation must be finally subservient, since even that enjoyment of nature and art which is the most intellectual cannot be a substitute for the reciprocal influence of one will on another.

The chief danger to companionship arises from vanity. For where it is really a matter of representing our characters to others, that is, of appearances, the step to the over-valuation of appearances, that is, to self-glorification, is not great. Self-glorification is the worship of delusion, and entangles the mind more and more in vain delusion. On the other hand, candour and susceptibility are the good genii of social intercourse. Candour is opposed to reserve and to mere gossipiness; susceptibility is opposed to self-conceit and pretence. But it is plain how true it is that these excellences can only be the fruits of a tree whose roots are sound. When the roots are sound, a princely mind will show itself in true courtesy, although it may fail in many respects of exhibiting the polish of good society.

In our social circumstances, hospitality is frequently a form of companionship, although it has widely departed from its original character of ministering love, and appears in other forms of helpful assistance and benevolence.

#### THE STATE.

Companionship, art, and science are often called 'free' fellowships, although they certainly do create and need manifold fixed forms. As an antithesis to these 'free' forms the social community which is realised under the coercion of law is sometimes thought of. But the above examples of 'free' forms of social fellowship are not unrelated to law—least of all the family relationship, which in its nature is at the same time especially independent of it. But law is more closely connected

with commercial life. It is now proper to look at that sphere more closely which may be described as society affected by law. As such it comprehends all that has hitherto been discussed. It is the sheltering roof covering the many-roomed house of human society. In order to put in a clear light the verdict of Christian ethics in the state, we must here set forth, as a preliminary, all that is most essential to its nature.

*The Nature of the State.*

Nation, Power, Law are the three master-concepts on the synthesis of which the idea of the state reposes. In order to reach a right understanding, it will be instructive to examine these carefully, as a reciprocal series. Nation is a larger community of men, who are connected by blood-relationship, language, fixed abodes, customs, interests, and history. These grounds of connection may operate in very various proportion. Sometimes the natural and sometimes the historical elements may be the larger factors. The first of these, the natural elements, do not suffice for a permanent union; the latter may really form a substitute for the former, reconcile great difference in racial character—at least in a smaller area, and where there are strong common interests, as, *e.g.*, Switzerland; whereas where these are absent and complicated conditions arise in a larger area like that of Austria-Hungary, when even the most elaborate attempts at ‘equalisation’<sup>1</sup> yield no guarantee of permanence. The strongest bond of union is that which specially arises from intellectual interests in common, national culture. But we only call that the ‘state’ which is formed by a national community under the protection of law. The Grecian people could not for long periods of their history be called a Grecian state. We have previously discussed the nature of law as the generally binding public regulation of all intercourse (p. 136 ff.); that is, it defines the scope to be given to individual activity, and settles what each must grant to others. If any dispute

<sup>1</sup> The well-known word in the politics of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the ‘Ausgleich,’ which refers to the desire to secure equal treatment in all respects as between the two parts of the Empire where naturally racial distinction and jealousies are found.—TR.



arise over the question whether the idea of force is implicate in the concept of law, it is indubitable that in this actual world law cannot be carried out without force. If law is the lord, it yet needs for its mastery this servant—force. And in any case the legalised community which forms a nationality is a *state* by the fact that it has the power, the force needed to carry through the law, and to maintain law and order, with all the interests involved, intact even against external foes. Sovereignty, internal and external, belongs therefore to the idea of the state, so that a confederacy is not in the strict sense of the word a state. Consequently we may say that a state is a community of people under the protection of law, armed with the power of enforcing it, a legally constituted, independent nation.

In this general notion there is room for all sorts of distinctions, both as to what concerns the range of state-activity and what has regard to the rights of the individual in relation to the state; since in fact the state means the binding together of many into a unity. The latter is merely an application of the general question, whether the individual exists for the sake of the corporate whole or the whole for the individual (*cf.* Socialism and Individualism, p. 143 ff.). The former view is known as the absolutist theory of the nature of the state, and the latter as the liberalist—namely, that the ordering of law is only a means of securing the greatest possible scope for individual freedom, while in the former case it is the sole means for carrying out the state idea, that is to say, the common ends which are included in that idea. In actual history, of course, these two theories pass over into one another. Even where they are found in some degree pure, the ways in which they are carried out in practice are very various. Robespierre, in his type, set up the idea of liberty, equality, fraternity; Frederick the Second, that of an absolute monarchy. The other point as to the range of state interference depends on this. He who regards the state as essentially the servant of the individual will be jealous for the so-called ‘political state,’ *i.e.* he would confine the state to the functions of determining the limits of and protecting freedom, which is indispensable so that as many persons as possible may be able to use their liberty

untrammelled. On the opposite side there stands the 'social state,' so called; *i.e.* it is the duty of the state of its own accord, and its positive duty, to advance all the purposes of the national life as a corporate whole; consequently to influence, as a kind of earthly providence, all other spheres of social activity, adjust all differences, and unite all for a great collective success. It is not difficult to understand how easily that 'political state' may be used by the strong against the weak, who stand in especial need of legal protection; how easily thus the greatest right may become the greatest wrong; and, on the other hand, how easy is the temptation for the 'social state' to encroach on the independence of the various bodies who set up in opposition to the ideal of civilisation it seeks to further.

This whole notion of the state thus sketched in outline is itself the product of history. Stages in this prolonged development are indicated by such terms as the tribal and race communities, the city as an independent state, Oriental empires, personal rule, territorial states, pure despotisms, the bureaucratic state, the modern 'political' and 'social' states. If after this glance at the development of the state we touch upon origins, we find that two methodised concepts important in ethics have a specially clear application here. Firstly, it is in no way invariably the case that the end to be gained is the motive, or that the idea of a moral Good is invariably the reason why any particular form of government arises. A confusion on this point is the ground on which rests the theory of a 'social contract' so long maintained, even by those who looked at the subject from opposite standpoints. The theory is that the recognition of the utility of the regulations of law gave rise to this agreement, of voluntarily yielding the right of unlimited individual freedom on the part of these individuals. The truth is that actual needs of the simplest kind, the right to which was invaded by the violence of the powerful, really form the groundwork of the need of an ordered state, and the 'contract' assumed really presupposes the existence of these. Secondly, whatever may be the origin of the state, the dignity which belongs to the law of the state cannot be lessened by such origin, whatever its form may have been. In fact, the point as to the validity of

any truth is quite a different question from the inquiry as to how it came to possess it, whether gained by process of thought or as the result of action.

*The Meaning of the State.*

The significance of the state for the Kingdom of God becomes clearer when we recollect that the verdict of Christianity in history has (as to the principle) wavered between the most extreme opposites. For Hegel the state is the highest ethical form of society, explicitly the realisation of the ethical ideal. This view was a revival of the ancient conception of the state as the 'highest Good,' and indeed went beyond it. For after the tasks of nations grow wider and deeper, and the idea of a 'humanity' gains acceptance, such an estimate of the state has more to be said for it. In such an estimate expression is given to the yearning for a full realisation of the Good, particularly in the form which Rothe gave to it—that the perfect state will be the Kingdom of God on earth. But it is precisely in this form that the impossibility of the idea is clear. Such an overestimate of the state necessarily involves underestimation of the other subordinate social spheres, abridges and narrows their special value. Art and science as an affair of state lose their freedom, and hence their ethical value; and even commercial intercourse loses its inexhaustible vivacity and its educative power, which we are bound to recognise in spite of our view of the attendant dangers and injurious effects. But at the same time the importance of the state itself, raised to so exalted a place, is in truth necessarily curtailed. For what is it if it is not a community under the sanction of law? But as such it is impossible for it to accomplish these tasks. For such an end powers and capacities must be assigned to it which it cannot employ without itself becoming the fellowship of love as distinct from law; in short, a confused, contradictory, and therefore ineffective form. St Augustine stands almost at the opposite pole in his judgment. According to him the state arose as the result of our sinful condition, and is in its nature sinful. The force and coercion which characterise it are the pure antithesis to the kingdom of love, the Kingdom of God. It is the kingdom

of this world under the prince of darkness, beginning with the fratricide Cain. The recognised Catholic doctrine is milder in form. The state has not arisen from sin in its origin; it arose as a defence against sin; it is the human as well as the divinely designed 'social contract' for protection against wrong. But the state merely ministers to material interests. It is the Church that represents the highest, the supernatural end. And we recall what that means in the Roman Catholic view (p. 111 ff.). Therefore worldly government must act on the prompting of the Church. To her belong the two swords: only, one is to be borne by the Church alone, the other by the state on the Church's behalf. By this theory the state is first of all under-valued because law is depreciated; and not only so, but the other communities too do not get their due, since they are externally made subject to the Church; and finally, this over-valuation of the Church gives up its own idea of its equivalence with the Kingdom of God, to its own injury. It assigns to itself a part which it cannot perform without casting its crown away; its transcendent 'Good' becomes in this world scarcely real, and the Church itself grows worldly.

The sixteenth article of the Confession of Augsburg is directed chiefly against this under-valuation which the fanatics of the Reformation period shared in agreement with the Roman Catholic view. It says "that all magisterial authority in the world is the good ordinance of God, by God created and established." "The Gospel does not stumble over worldly government." "Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and conscience gains obvious solace" from this doctrine. Now, we must guard, of course, against importing modern ideas on the nature of the state into such words; and especially on the relation of the state to the Church, such as making them equivalent to the idea of the separation of the spiritual and the worldly, of Church and state in our sense. Church and state were then still an unseparated whole; the Christian society in the holy Roman Empire of the German nation. The secular authority is a portion of this Christendom, established by God for the punishment of evil-doers and for the protection of the good. On the other hand, the clergy too formed a portion of this kingdom. Both are connected with each other



as the hand and the eye, and unitedly represented Christian authority. Only (as was considered), the action of the ecclesiastical and civil authority ought to be separated; but even the civil authority has its Christian vocation. Certainly these are not quite our present ideas of the state. This position may often seem to us as if it had not quite attained the whole high level of the saying of St Paul (Rom. xiii. 1), to which the Reformers always appealed. To the Church of Rome—which easily enough appeared to early Christendom to be ‘great Babylon’—St Paul does not write a word of the prudence of unquestioning obedience, but the word of faith, when he says, All authority is from God, in its ultimate origin and in its ultimate purpose, ‘for good’ (“He is the minister to thee for good,” Rom. xiii. 4). He uses that simple, inexhaustible word ‘for good’ which he employs in the same Epistle of the highest conceivable ‘Good,’ which is the portion of the children of God (Rom. viii. 28). Authority ministers to them, is a means for the highest end, and therefore obedience to it ‘for conscience’ sake is needful, and flows from faith. In faith St Paul looks high over all that in this world-kingdom must to him, as a Christian, seem to be evil without parallel; he sees only God’s will, His creative power and His holy design. All of ungodly civilisation that is incorporated in this state seems to his eye to disappear in the reflection that it is the agent of ordered law “for the punishment of the evil-doer and for the praise of them that do well.” Only let us not forget that this word also of the Apostle is a clear light on a vast history; and that each period of this history must use this light for itself. The like is true of the words of the Lord Himself. In this case too we must say of them as of the words of St Paul, that they for the most part say next to nothing directly of that which we call the state; and so far as they do, in the first line it is anything but to its glorification. St. Matt. xx. 25 emphasises the Kingdom of God as the antithesis of the ‘exercise of lordship,’ the force and violence of earthly rule. Ministering love is so much more than all law that, above all, the antithesis of *law* and love must be insisted on. Hence too that demand, which has so often excited objection, for the renunciation of one’s ‘rights.’ And even in

the saying about the tribute penny (St Matt. xxii. 15), the first design of it is to warn against confusing divine and earthly law, and to exalt in its majesty the rightful claim which God has on His people. But since to "render to God that which is God's" is something so utterly different, so infinitely higher than to "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"—money with the "image and superscription"—in this way that which at first is a refusal turns out to be a recognition of a legal right of the emperor, and a quiet challenge to the recognition of the higher law. It is as ever: when that which stands highest gains its true place, then all other things fall into their right order. Then we may also point out how Jesus loved His people, ministered first to them, and was in this matter the teacher of His greatest Apostle (Rom. ix. 1). And if from this standpoint we look again at these statements of the Reformers, then the reference to Rom. xiii. and St Matt. xxii. is an interpretation and explanation of the original Gospel in and for a new era; and if we do not interpret it in the sense of our own present ideas, it still really is the living and producing cause of our modern convictions that "Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom." This saying produced a new idea of the Church as against the Roman Catholic idea, and from it too there grew up a new idea of the state. How often has the proposition that we ought to obey God rather than man (Acts v. 29) been applied to the Church, which, as a religious community with its system of jurisprudence, identified itself with God's Kingdom. It was thought that God was obeyed by refusing obedience to this Church, the caricature of a true divine state, and by recognising the secular authority as "the good ordinance of God." The state as legally ordered in this divinely determined shape was now entitled to be put on a level with the other ordinances of God, the family, the Church, and no longer subordinated to the Church, but to the Kingdom of God only, along with the rest of the special social spheres. This idea was at first existent merely as a germ waiting development. Nor is it to be wondered at if withal—for instance, in the case of Luther himself—other statements are found which represent secular government as all "of the earth, earthy," and valueless (*cf.* his expression,

“the world as the devil’s inn”). But the new idea was a productive germ.

This Evangelical estimate of the state, therefore, simply follows from what has been said on the subject of Law. Because law in its general sense puts into shape that which love itself requires and is its indispensable prerequisite, the state as a society existing for the maintenance of rights has a wholly special dignity in and for itself, such as does not so directly appertain to the other communities as family, Church, and so forth. And it has with good reason been pointed out what importance the state has in this respect in the education of the moral personality, and how for the sake of this important end Christian ethics favours the democratic principle, if by this phrase is meant the independence of public opinion and action, and not the arid reduction of society to a dead unintellectual equality. But so far as the state (see above) means a legally constituted nation having its own special history, that is, with the civilisation wholly peculiar to itself which it has acquired, the importance of the state is increased in depth and breadth by this acquirement. It is not simply a ‘political state’ but also a ‘progressive social state.’ The sense in which it is such may be more clearly explained after having settled that its main duty is concerned with law as a ‘political state.’ That is, it is desirable that the state should foster all the ends of civilisation, since these concern the welfare of the community at large, and consequently are such as it alone can carry through. Of this nature plainly are the economic tasks, which have a far greater range than those of science and art. But also in this department we must not forget the proper freedom of the individual; and, on the other hand, science (for instance in the school question) has a very general importance for the corporate whole. Consequently the most serious problems of every period require a solution in keeping with the needs and knowledge of the time. Hence it is undoubtedly the case that just as the principle of democracy is, as above shown, a truly Christian one, because it is the insistence on the independence of the personality, our present reflection shows us the equally unimpeachable importance of conservatism in state

affairs. And in this the question is not as to the incomplete realisation of this principle, but merely the principle itself. But how these two principles, the democratic and conservative, help one another in state affairs—as in truth they have a common origin—simply appears from the foundation principles of the nature of morals as they are continually more closely determined and have become plainer from their manifold applications—that is, from the principles involved in the relationship between personality and love.

Yet so much the more plainly does the question force itself on our attention whether we can speak of a Christian state, and ought so to speak, and in what sense. Not in the sense that the interests of the state and that of the Kingdom of God are identical, or that the state's prime duty is to plant and foster the growth of Christian faith and Christian love. It neither can do this nor ought to do these things. In this way its power for its own task is curtailed. He who will foster righteousness can only be unrighteous in using force where no force avails. And the proper work demanded of the Kingdom of God is injured because the means used for its accomplishment is contradictory to its true nature. It is instructive to mark the varied forms in which this feature has put its stamp on the Christian state. In Constantinople, the new Rome, an imperial patriarchate; in the holy Roman Empire of Germany; in the state-churchism of Protestant churches, operative too in Catholic provinces by means of the territorial law of the Reformation time; finally, the Romanticist inclination of the nineteenth century (for instance) to form Prussia into a Christian state, partly favoured by the irresponsible counsellors in the time of Frederick William the Fourth, who many a time claimed their own right in the name of pietism to carry out plans of this description. The imperishable service that pietism rendered, as a matter of history, consists in the fact that it earnestly opposed the old state-churchism because (as it maintained) the Kingdom of God "cometh not with the outward observation" of secular power. Such a Christian state as that proposed is in truth unchristian, because it springs from that self-exaltation of the state above spoken



of. The state is made 'the highest good' and identified with the Kingdom of God, and the obverse side of this is that it lowers its own position by subjecting itself to the Church, which thus oversteps its province, and in reality lowers itself as a Church. And hence the Christian state can assume either the form of a state-church or a church-state, of a secular ecclesiastical domination; although the latter form has only been realised in the small papal state, the 'States of the Church,' which for impartial historians acquired the fame of the worst-managed state ever known. The fall of this government has in the judgment of many Catholics given a fresh impetus to the Roman Church. As opposed to all these, it is the high ideal of Protestant ethics, and one to be more and more realised, that the state is to be Christian in a quite different sense by its being led on the path of freedom through the power of the Gospel; and that in legislation, in its judicial functions, in administration, and in all these spheres both when the questions at issue concern the most general principles of law and those which refer to the multiplicity of the problems of civilisation. And as to all these problems it ever asks what is the cosmic view which stands at the back of them. An example of the first of these points is the defence of 'morality,' which is a task differing in range and character according as the high plane of Christian ethics is taken as the starting-point or not. An example of the second is the way in which our great statesman laid down as the foundation of the 'social laws' that legislation must be in great measure in agreement with Christian ideas. But as this case shows, the proper way to permeate the state with Christian principles is through the Christian disposition of its citizens, as was pointed out at the time of this legislation: the "state consists, in great majority, of Christians." The question is, in fact, how far men of light and leading, supported by the consent of the majority, and even legislating in opposition to public opinion, may be able to foster Christian principles in the consciousness of the nation. The goal to be aimed at is for the state to do perfectly all that it legitimately can do for the Kingdom of God. By so doing, it at the same time serves its own end, inasmuch as order based on law gets its roots

deeply fixed in the minds of the people—roots which then grow in the soil of the Christian religion. And if this religion is represented in the diverse forms exhibited by the Roman and the Protestant Churches, then we must logically go further and say: In the sense laid down, the State must not merely be Christian, but Protestant. Again, this is not as if we meant it to be inferred that the state ought itself to realise a Christianity of the Evangelical type, but that it should stand in a closer relation to it than to any other. For the Evangelical Church yields in principle (not always actually) to the state what is the state's without any idea in the background of dominating over it. The Roman Church finds it a real necessity to be at war with the state, of course actually—"with due regard to the times," and with an eye to what is practicable—in a state of truce. It is therefore absurd for the state, on the ground of equality and fairness, to treat both alike. Such equality of treatment is, in fact, inequality, since the relation of the two Churches to the state is not alike.

While this question of the attitude of the state to the Church can only be made clear by dwelling upon the latter, when we come to use the term 'Christian state' light is cast on two special points which have long been in debate, the public observance of Sunday and the question of oaths. The Sunday question is a complicated one, as it is possible to be among the most zealous supporters of a Sunday rest day, and yet reject a common reason for striving for its maintenance—namely, when the claim is put forward that it is God's command, whether resting on one of the ten commandments, or to be traced further back, and founded on its antiquity and majesty as a primeval ordinance. It has been pointed out, on the authority of Luther's teaching, that the fourth commandment, as every single commandment of the Old Testament, has been abolished for the Christian; and that the contrary assertion, although it has a pious ring about it, is in clear contradiction to the words of the Apostle St Paul, and those of the Lord Himself. But even if this commandment applied to the Christian, still the Christian, it is thought, could not as such carry it out. Nevertheless, there are the most urgent reasons for

preserving the Sunday rest day. For one thing, the need of human nature for regular cessation from toil, rendered all the more necessary by the feverish unrest of modern life; and for another thing, the need of opportunity for the cultivation of the higher mental and spiritual life, and the highest of all, the religious needs; a necessity deepened by so much excessive toil in the service of material interests, in short, the pursuit of gain. The Christian knows that these needs, created by God and satisfied by Him, are the ground of the Sabbatic law (St Mark ii. 22 ff.); and although free from the law, he voluntarily subjects himself to it as a blessing. The Christian state too will provide for these needs, and must, as the source of law, use her power to this end, since even in a Christian nation only the protection of the law can secure for the humble and poor, confronted with human selfishness, the blessing of a free Sunday. We may therefore venture to say that the blessings of the Sunday rest day have proved their value in regard to the health, trade, family, life, education, and morality of the nation; that the resistance of selfish interests (for instance, in regard to the servants and employees of railways) grows weaker, if only slowly; and even the bogus cry of the 'wearisome English and American Sunday' exerts continually less influence. But here it is especially clear how the best laws of a Christian state remain inoperative without the active help of all. In some parts of Germany many curious customs of long-established use survive which certainly appear to have prejudiced the Sunday law.

#### *Oaths.*

The consideration of the oath, as such, does not merely include that taken before magisterial authority, though, not without good reason, the interest of the subject has turned on this. An oath is the protestation of the truth of a statement by an appeal to God as witness and judge. This latter is at least implied in most formulas as, 'So help me God.' A distinction is made between the oath of asseveration and the promissory oath in the assumption of an office. Now, the command of our Lord (St Matt. v. 34) seems an absolute one. The

words 'not at all' do not allow of a forced interpretation. Not only is wanton swearing excluded; not only the pharisaic and jesuitical trifling which supposes that the variety of the words, 'neither by the Temple' nor 'by Jerusalem,' or the greater or lesser earnestness of the oath uttered, or mental reservation, could abate one jot of its inviolability; it is also an evasion of the clear meaning of the saying to assert that Jesus cannot intend to forbid all swearing, when in fact the Old Testament speaks of God's oath, and His oath to the faithful is gloried in as a sign of the favour of God. But certainly the fact that Jesus Himself adopted the oath put to Him by the high priest, "I adjure thee by the living God," demands an explanation (St Matt. xxvi. 63). This fact has been made a chief reason for the statement that it is permissible for the Christian to swear before the magistrate. And certainly the Augsburg Confession (in Art. 16<sup>1</sup>), in the same article in which it establishes the divine right of the magistracy, also affirms that an oath may be taken by the Christian without sin. (This was first of all declared in opposition to the fanatics with whom their mild successors, the Mennonites<sup>2</sup> of to-day, agree.) But this is no sufficient foundation. The circumstance that in the Epistles of St Paul there are asseverations, and even attestations by oath which go far beyond the 'Yea, yea,' 'Nay, nay' of the Sermon on the Mount, may help us to find one. Many have been too easily satisfied with the explanation that these expressions are a reflection of the Apostle's past life in Judaism; while many others have taken reasonable offence at this explanation. St Paul plainly uses such words when he is dealing with opponents who doubt his veracity, because an oath will set before them impressively the question of conscience whether they ought to believe him or not. Thus we may — reverting to what has been earlier remarked — say, in the form of such exacting words of the Lord, that Jesus desires to accentuate the duty of absolute truth on the part of His disciples; their

<sup>1</sup> *Sylloge Confessionum*, p. 128. Oxford ed.

<sup>2</sup> The Mennonites are a sect of Anabaptists. Menno, their originator, was born in 1496 in Friesland. The 39th Article of the Church of England is directed against the same error of Anabaptists. — TR.



bare 'yea' or 'nay' is to be to them as the most solemn oath. And we have already seen why the duty of truthfulness has such dignity (p. 227). But the words 'not at all' have their obvious limits in the sense that, where the hypothesis fails—viz. that simple assertion alone is sufficient to induce belief—an oath may be used. In the kingdom of sin, in a world of lying, it may consequently become a duty for the Christian to confirm the truth of an assertion by an oath. But it is magisterial authority, which is ordained by God for good, that has, in such a case and for the cause of truth, the especial right and duty to use this means for this end. In such cases an oath is, in fact, a work pleasing to God; it is the imprecatory corroboration of the truth, a duty to God, a confession, and at the same time a protest against the falsities of the world. In this too all ministers to the good of the Christian, and that which is a necessary evil as the result of sin becomes a means of honouring God, a benefit to our neighbour, and a deepening of our own life of faith. From all such sacred use of the oath not only must all that be kept at a distance which is an injury to reverence and humility before God (*e.g.* every word which is a challenge to God or a cursing of self), but it cannot be denied that the Christian state demands too many oaths, often almost as mere conventional usage. The oaths of office, that is, such as are promissory in their character, are not for the most part justifiable. In any case they could and ought to be confined to quite special cases within a narrowly circumscribed range. For they must all be explained with the proviso that he who is guilty of untruth in a detail is not on that account a perjurer. What value have they then which cannot be attained in some other way, and indeed with more propriety? There is a reflection that goes deeper, which in our present conditions to-day may be raised against the universal demand for the oath, even the oath of a witness. A belief in God no longer exists in wide circles. Where this is the case the oath has become a meaningless form, the obligation of the oath a contradictory pretence, and for Christian sentiment a dishonour to the name of God. And it is not simply for declared atheists that the state ought to consider some substitute. Nor is it to

be overlooked how the public well-being might be injured if the penalties that have hitherto been inflicted for perjury were imposed for the breach of the affirmation substituted in the place of an oath. Of course in such changes the greatest care is demanded, because they might easily have the accompanying consequence of awakening suspicion in those in whom independent thought is wanting, that generally, even amongst educated persons, the belief in God was a thing of the past. The average politician is not always able rightly to estimate the mental condition of the masses, and hence in such matters any change had need be carefully made, and in such a way as to maintain an old custom so long as it has any real justification; that is, in other words, conservative statecraft is much to be desired in such matters. The limits of such procedure are also clear, and what is generally and plainly recognisable as unvarnished ought not to be preserved. And to the Christian sensibility of the present generation acquainted with history, it is intolerable for the state in any way to present the appearance of acting as if it could of its own self produce an effect on morality or religion. It rather renders to Christianity a great service by making it quite clear that there is such a thing as a region of inner freedom and personal responsibility in which the majesty of the state has no right of interference. For law only takes cognisance of that which is obvious to all the world; but the state, even as a civilised state of advancing culture, and when influenced by the Christian spirit, is in its innermost nature a nation organised under law.

### *The School.*

The carrying out of this principle in the schools as a field for its operation is needful as well as difficult. Every organised nation with any self-respect will take into its own hands the education of youth, that is, will care for its own future. The supreme guidance of education in schools is a matter for the state, not for the family or the Church; but for the above-mentioned reasons not to the state in opposition to, but in union with, these other portions of society, a union which is easier to demand than to establish in actual life, and which can

only be approximately realised, as the nature of the case shows, by continual reform and perpetual conflict. It is confessedly a perplexing problem to assign the limits of the school in relation to the family, and one scarcely less so that of its relation to the Church. (*Cf.* the section on the Church.)

### *Patriotism.*

It is only in relation to the state that patriotism is a duty and a virtue when we have learnt to appreciate its true character and ethical value for the Kingdom of God. It is something different from, and greater than, love of home which depends merely on nature, and belongs to the narrowest sphere. It involves something different from, and greater than that sense of the value of law which fails in possessing the living power of self-sacrifice on behalf of some particular nation with its special character and past history. The cosmopolitan may have this juridical sense, but he has no sympathy with the proper genius and peculiar task of his nation; he does not understand that the corporate whole of humanity is intended to consist of single special members of the body, or the certain fact that according to the Christian faith each separate part of this whole is designed by the will of God as a means for giving its special impress to morality. But it is at the same time unchristian to strain love of country so far as to limit the idea of the Kingdom of God into which all nations are called. And the history also of our own day shows that there is only one certain remedy against a barren cosmopolitanism, as against a hollow national self-conceit, and that is the faith that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek nor barbarian (Gal. iii. 28); that the Christian's highest citizenship is 'in heaven' (Heb. xi. 16); that in any and every case of conflict he must for its sake renounce the merely earthly; but that nevertheless all these racial distinctions—as the early Church shows in its history—have in their specialities a value for the Kingdom of God (*cf.* Ep. to Romans). In the absence of this faith, the words patriotism and humanity become even among Christians mere phrases frequently used in curious interchange; certain as it is that in the main the movement in the direction of the national state idea has given its impress and

importance to the nineteenth century. But how we are to prove our Christian patriotism is made clearer without entering into minutiae by devoting some attention to some aspects of our life in the state, which will at the same time serve to bring its character and value into light.

#### SOME ASPECTS OF STATE LIFE.

##### *Private Rights.*

These aspects are marked out by calling to mind the usual method of division of law. Law as it relates to private persons regulates the relation of individuals to others, in the various conditions of human intercourse and trade (*e.g.* the laws of property, marriage-laws, and the law of inheritance), and secures to each his share of freedom, and determines the amount of respect each must give to that of others. In a Christian nation it is influenced by Christian morality not only as regards the most general principles, but often down to minute details. It has been boasted of our new civil law procedure that it pays some serious attention to the idea of creating healthy conditions for the labouring classes with entire conscientiousness; of making laws not for the capable but for the poor and weak, of whom it is easy to take a wrong advantage; of securing confidence in the administration of justice and insisting on its conscientious administration. But even single legislative acts like those which guarantee greater personal independence—for instance, that relating to the female worker who is married to a spendthrift husband—are due to the quiet operation of Christian ideas on this respect that ought to be shown to woman.

##### *The Rights of the State.*

Public laws which secure the common ends of a nation are distinguished from the laws relating to private persons. If public laws fall into the divisions: state law, ecclesiastical law, penal law, it is clear that this brings together things plainly different. Reflection on these again deepens our conviction of the greatness of the state's task. Penal law determines how the state is to preserve the regulations of law in the case of



infringements of rights. Constitutional law, or state law as regulative of the form of government, is the foundation of all law. It was from this point we started—that the state is the nation armed with power, a legally ordered community. Consequently it must be definitely settled who is to use this power, and in what degree the authorities of the state are to take their share in its use. In the absence of a settled arrangement, the state is like the house divided against itself which cannot stand. And from these directly follow the two supreme principles—firstly, that the government should be independent, and as much as possible free from party pressure, because otherwise it is not state government; secondly, that those who belong to the state should have their share in it as far as possible according to their importance, since otherwise, without the support which rests on the will of all, there is no security for permanence. It is obvious that these two propositions can easily fall into contradictories; so much the more is their union an ideal the realisation of which must be sought in ever new and fuller form. But what form of state this union will most completely guarantee no single proposition is capable of expressing; certainly none that may be claimed as constituting the only Christian form. The special genius and history of a nation will settle this. This much may be said—that the well-known three forms which Aristotle distinguishes—the monarchical, the aristocratic, the democratic—nowhere occur in pure form in actual history; and further, that such occurrence in pure form could only be regarded as a misfortune, as in fact Aristotle himself points out in the three caricatures of these respective forms. Some sort of commixture of these three chief forms is, in the varied complicated conditions which obtain, an intrinsic necessity. This follows from the two fundamental needs of the social state as laid down—the independence of the government and the participation of all. In particular a monarchy ‘by the grace of God’ that has no strong roots in the intelligent participation in the government by a free people, or a republic without a strong executive, is intolerable to highly developed nations and unenduring. Germans rejoice that the idea of the monarchy which doctrinaire philosophers would only permit as intrinsically

justifiable for the beginnings of civilisation has gained a deep hold on their affections, and gained new energy in the soil of the new Empire: especially at a time which cannot dispense with leaders who stand above all the interested groups in the struggle for the reconciliation of economic and industrial interests.

### *Obedience.*

Over against authority, whatever form it may take, stands obedience as the duty of the Christian. The security of law and order is so great a good that even great anomalies in details are of much less consequence than the destruction of that security; and the Christian who has the conviction of the divine origin and purpose of law has an unequalled incentive and motive force to such obedience, and in that obedience he finds his freedom. Only it is obvious enough that, directly the state has a fixed constitution, all parties are alike pledged to obedience to it, each according to the degree prescribed to him by the state, but to all alike absolute in its claim; for example, king, the representatives of the people, civil officers, citizens, and so forth: "Faithfulness in return for faithfulness."

But in this a serious problem is involved, which must be closely attended to, because otherwise its solution—when some such single point such as the right or wrong of revolution arises—can only be incomplete. Law, in spite of its majesty, often insisted on, is certainly only a means to the highest end—even constitutional law. Consequently its reform in accordance with the needs of a nation undergoing development is a moral duty, otherwise "statute and law are handed down like some hereditary disease." The obedience of the Christian, therefore, precisely because in its deepest grounds it is obedience to God, cannot be a blind obedience. The Christian desires to serve God's will, as the "good, acceptable and perfect will of God." Hence he is not only pledged in the case of clear conflict to obey God rather than man (if, that is to say, the question at issue is really one of obeying God, and not possibly His supposed representatives), but also, so far as it is his

personal duty, to strive that law may be always in accord with the highest end. Now, this his labour must of course concern itself, as its very first duty, with the content of civic law, as well as of penal law, and seek its continuous reform according to the needs of the day. But the reforming spirit will quietly extend its operations according to circumstances to constitutional law as well. Are not the most essential reforms wrecked at one time by the opposition of the Crown, and at another by the parliamentary representatives of the people? Ought not both parties to feel it their duty to be careful in such cases? If anyone were to affirm that the Christian need not trouble himself about these questions because in the decisive passage, Rom. xiii. 1, there is no reference to them, he would forget that for the Christians in the Roman Empire no such influence as is here supposed could possibly be exerted. For the authorities of a Christian state it follows at once of necessity from the meaning of that apostolical injunction of "obedience for conscience' sake," that it is the individual duty to further the general good in special conditions. And at least, too, the supreme principle of Christian conduct in any given condition is not difficult to deduce from that injunction. It is this—the right and the duty of reform are implied in the existing constitution of a state. The English Parliament of 1640 had other rights and duties than the representative assembly of the French nation in 1789; Zwinglius other duties than Luther in Wittenberg.

Every honest battle for the right on ground of law can therefore be better defended from the Christian standpoint than from any other. The necessity of steady progress in a living, legally ordered society is intelligible to the Christian from the very nature of what right and law mean. Of course which side he shall take, his gifts, education, and the occasion point out to him what his 'calling' is in each case; on such a matter in the complexity of affairs only his own conscience can decide on the whole as in each single instance. Further, charity in judgment of others, confronted with such hard questions for decision, is a supreme Christian duty. Luther, on the ground of conscientious scruple, declined to favour the far-

reaching plans of a Protestant alliance. Much that is to the point might be said how such limitation of efforts to the power of the word of God alone preserved the purity of the German Reformation movement. Still, the fearful horrors of the counter-Reformation may, according to human judgment, be regarded as no less one of the consequences of this limitation. Were the people of Zurich and Geneva to blame if they, of different temperament, education, and differently situated, decided differently from Luther? Do not the Lutheran churches profit in part from these different resolves of these men? But also, has not Germany, in spite of all this "political mistake of Luther's," remained in an especial way a "house of defence" for the Gospel?

*Revolution.*

Revolution is not a battle for constitutional reform but for the destruction of the state constitution. On this subject a glance at history shows us how uncertain may be the boundary-line between legitimate conflict and revolution; because the boundary-lines of right are frequently indeterminate, *e.g.* as between the Emperor and the German states at the time of the Reformation. Think of the plans of Philip of Hesse! Consequently, in order to see what is undoubted revolution, in the strict sense of the word, we must distinguish more clearly than is often done two points of view—firstly, the Christian ethical judgment on the importance which a revolution may have for the history of a nation and for humanity at large; and secondly, the Christian moral judgment on the author of such revolution. As far as the first is concerned, the evils and horrors of many revolutions are patent to all, as well as their momentous after-effects at large and in detail. It is clear too that the nations who have reformed themselves have great advantage over those who have gained their ends by revolution. But no one denies, on the other hand, the dreadful conditions of social misery which forced on the revolution of 1789, or the beneficial results of that revolution, without which even its strongest opponents are unable to imagine what the life of the present day would be. These are facts, and the Christian will consider them in the light of Rom. xi. 33, *i.e.* they will be a



means for the strengthening of his faith that God rules all things according to the counsel of His will, and that even revolution may be "an envoy of order," "a bit of the great battle between truth and sham," "a true though terrible apocalypse for a vicious age."<sup>1</sup>

As far as regards a Christian ethical judgment on the author of a revolution, it has already been suggested to us by our reflections on our duty in relation to the law, which here finds a weighty application. Revolution is, by reason of the fully acknowledged value of legal administration as a foundation of moral order, absolutely reprehensible, save when the breach with law and order is made in full consciousness of responsibility, and with the clear conviction that the administration of law has become a hindrance to moral order instead of a help, and so on this account must be broken down. This must be done in full readiness for personal sacrifice (p. 226). In this case Carlyle's word becomes true, that "Revolution is better than resignation." But the Christian, who has such a choice set before him, will with especial sincerity seek to know the will of God, and conjoin with this a particularly strong feeling of the limitations of human insight, before he will feel in a position to decide whether any break with constituted law is ethically justifiable; and he will recognise how doubtful the collaborators are on whom he can calculate to carry out such a resolution. The Christian knows that he is free from any temptation to 'play Providence.' Our great statesman, who candidly carried out such a revolution as morally necessary, uttered an impressive warning on this point. In short, the Christian has no need to fear superficial and scornful criticism of 'patient obedience'; nor will he permit himself to be driven by this scorn from his own high standard. How little Christian ethics judges according to partisan feeling is clear from all that has been said. In the strictly logical sense of the word, Revolution is not, as a matter of fact, confined to any individual tendency or party, nor to those who are called 'subjects.' There may be a revolution from above as well as from below, to which the same ethical judgment is applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle.

*The Right of Punishment.*

Whereas in regard to constitutional law we have been occupied with the special points whether there is any particular form of constitution that may be considered the best, and whether there are any circumstances in which revolution in lieu of progressive reform may be justified, in regard to the right of punishment the question which stands in the forefront is as to the ethical nature of punishment. Put more specifically, the point at issue is as to the meaning and purpose of punishment, for it is already clear that it is felt to be in itself an evil, as an impairment of right. On this matter we recall, in passing, the fact that here too origin and validity are not in the same category. Suppose, if you like, that punishment is a slow development from blood-feud, requiring discharge, etc., this does not bring suspicion on its ethical importance. Therefore, what is its end? It is certain that in a morally trained community punishment will have an educative effect; but to designate reformation as the proper purpose of punishment inflicted by the state is a contradiction in itself; for the state is essentially a juridical community. And punishment is certainly not revenge taken by society as a whole. It is also something different from self-defence, for this term only has meaning apart from law. Nor can punishment be considered to be reparation or indemnification for injury inflicted; evidently not, as this is true only in the very smallest number of instances. Finally, there is no doubt that it serves as a deterrent; but this is a poor way of putting it, if this is conceived to be the purpose of punishment. The real core of the matter plainly is that punishment is for preventing infraction of the law. But then this may be more definitely put by saying that punishment is penal deprivation of some right, ordained by the representatives of law, with the design of upholding the administration of the law and preserving the state. But this notion, this view of punishment as means of the self-preservation of the state, as the protection of society, appears far too objective. This view, it is said, gives a utilitarian and merely empirical reason which does not adequately express the 'majesty

of punishment.' It is said that it is firmly fixed as with grappling irons to the eternal idea of retribution. It is not merely means for an earthly end, as the preservation of the state, but its purpose resides in itself. Punishment is to be administered not in order that there may be no infraction of the law, but because it has been broken. Punishment, they further say, is atonement, and its measure is not objective justice, but the subjective equivalence of punishment to the misdemeanour.

In reality Christian ethics knows no 'either'—'or' between this so-called sociological, modern juridical view of punishment as a state preservative and the other so-called 'exemplary theory,' or as between the (inaccurately named) 'educative theory' and the 'compensation theory.' If the relation between law and morality has been rightly defined, then the retributive theory, which is, at any rate, the only one clear and convincing, acquires a deeper significance by means of the others, and it certainly avoids their artificiality. If legal right is a necessary unfolding of ethical right, and even if nothing more, certain though it may be that it may have a plenary justification in the need of maintaining the administration of law, it has its final reason in the inviolability of the moral law, though only in the last resort. So far, then, it may be really maintained that the right of punishment gains its supreme sanction through Christian moral conviction; and it is clear that the progress of Christian morality in a nation will have an essential influence on its penal laws, both as regards the various deeds which are liable to punishment and as to the mode of punishment—this latter up to the point of its actual infliction—which must be punishment, not torture. Both in regard to the first and the second of these points the influence of Christian morality will be felt, so that the crime itself will not be looked at as an isolated fact, but the criminal valued as a complete personality. And then penal laws will become a great educative means, the content of which really forms a part of 'objective morality.' Rightly, therefore, has it been pointed out that the value of this aspect of the modern theory of punishment was recognised long before the victorious attack

on the world of criminal jurisprudence by Wichern,<sup>1</sup> the father of 'the Inner Mission.'

*Capital Punishment.*

With these thoughts in our minds we may be able to discuss without passion the much-disputed question of capital punishment. The fact that there are friends and foes of capital punishment among both philosophical and theological moralists, who are curiously divided on the question, prevents it from becoming a matter of faith, whatever our judgment may be. Some have demanded and striven for the maintenance of capital punishment in the name of the welfare of the state. But from the standpoint of the justification of punishment above touched on as arising from the idea of recompense, while Kant favours it, Fichte is against it. Theologians, too, have decidedly opposed capital punishment in the name of Christianity; particularly by an appeal to the Holy Scriptures. That it is assumed in them (Rom. xiii. 1 ff.) is just as undoubted as that the proof can scarcely be held to be sufficient that it is a principle of Christianity. Of the passage, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, etc." (Gen. ix. 6), the same thing is true as was quoted above from Luther in regard to another isolated Old Testament commandment. Some think that it appears from the nature of the Gospel to be dispensable; nay, that it is even unworthy; for in capital punishment the Christian society assumes to itself the right of placing the murderer beyond the pale of its own influence, and invades the prerogative of the Divine Majesty. But it is not characteristic of a living faith in God to think so highly of the earthly Christian society as to suppose that, apart from it, the victim is altogether lost; quite irrespective of the fact that the murderer has often been more seriously influenced by the thought of the proximity of death than the prisoner subject to life imprisonment, the fear of which is easily dulled. On the other hand, the advocates of capital punishment are unable to derive a plea for it from the nature of the Christian religion.

<sup>1</sup> Wichern, J. H., born 1808. The name 'Inner Mission' originated with him. His great work was in 'reformatory institutions' and other activities of this description.—TR.



In any case the question is chiefly a practical one, as to whether the state may safely dispense with it. This question leads on one side into technical considerations which lie outside the limits of our subject; and besides, for the present time the subject is simplified by the anarchist propaganda. As far as the principle is concerned it must be answered in the negative, as long as it cannot be made clear how the criminal condemned to lifelong hard labour on account of murder is to be restrained from a fresh murder. We may also go a step further. If punishment generally has its final basis in the inviolability of the moral law, then it appears to be right that the man who, so far as in him lies, has destroyed the foundation of all legally ordered common life should be made to forfeit the possibility of a further part in it. That is only the consequence of his own act. For this view the personal feeling of the criminal himself may, as is well known, be cited; death appears to him the only proper atonement he can make. And it is possible that the above-cited passages of Scripture may be understood in this way. Under all the circumstances (as the earnest opponents of capital punishment themselves admit), it is needful to do battle against all the mere "sentimentality of an affected humanitarianism."

### *Personal Responsibility.*

In treating of the subject of capital punishment Christian ethics cannot pass over without notice the lively discussions of the present day which arose at the same time as the debate on the 'End' of punishment. This is the question of how far men are accountable for their actions in the way accountability has been generally defined, and in the statute-book itself. This definition assumes the idea of the freedom of the will, so that personal responsibility is presupposed, except where some mental malady has so disturbed the normal consciousness that the resolves of the will are no longer free, and this can be proved to be the case. But instead of this, others now say there should be knowledge of the consequences of the action, or better—since such knowledge assigns too much to intellectual apprehension and denies the unity of the psychical life—there should be present

the normal power of the will as ordinarily moved by mental presentation ; in other words, the criminal must have the mental presentation of the punishment and the conception of it before him, if he is to be regarded as in possession of full responsibility, and is to be subject to punishment. Christian ethics can only take up the position, in regard to these important discussions, that has already been laid down and justified in the doctrine of the freedom of the will (p. 76). Christian ethics has no reason for asserting that such a theory must, so far as it is concerned, injure the state or generally alter in any essential respect the external form of human life ; but it will not allow that the reason and meaning of all human conduct would remain the same in the absence of the feeling of the personal responsibility which is an inseparable adjunct of freedom.

Thus here the same must be said as above on the End of punishment. Only, no hasty : 'This is Christian—that is heathenish.' The first impression made by the assertion that the retributive theory of punishment represented the idea of the moral order of the world with essentially more clearness, pureness, and depth, should not prevent us from recognising the truth that is contained in the idea of educative punishment. It is precisely the recognition of this truth that would lead us more assuredly to emphasise this thought. Meanwhile, the idea of retributive punishment is by many of its supporters grounded partly on a reason much too objective, and in the final resort contradictory, namely, as is asserted, on experience itself (since Kant's hypothesis can no longer be regarded as admitted by all) ; partly on a reason which is not accordant with the Christian concept of God, as if retribution were its innermost nature. Similarly is it here with the question of freedom. The new sociological theory has often, especially at first, been identified in quite a superficial way with the denial of personal responsibility and associated with unproved and unprovable naturalism (*cf.* Lombroso's *Born Criminal*, and on the contrary Aschaffenberg). More and more often has the question of the freedom of the will as a matter of personal conviction been separated from discussions on the penal laws, so that there are both friends and foes of personal freedom among the

supporters of that modern notion of criminal responsibility above mentioned. But still more with the energetic demand not to punish the crime but the criminal, so far as it is possible to human insight, and in punishing to reform (see above). The new school has brought into prominence claims of Christian ethics too long forgotten. And when it looks upon criminals as 'wounds in the social organism,' it provides new material for Christian reflection on the 'kingdom of sin,' even if that is done unconsciously and even often unwillingly.

## INTERNATIONAL LAW.

### *War.*

As a counterpart to the right of punishment within the state there is that of the relation of states to each other, the question of war. But inasmuch as war certainly is the last resource of a state in maintaining its rights in relation to other states, and that by an interruption of legally ordered intercourse, war throws light on the difference between international law and that law which internally regulates a state. In the single state, law prevails because it is one with the power which is a connotative mark of a state. But with regard to other states there is no such power for carrying out the rights of nations, or maintaining its own order by the impairment of the rights of other nations, as in the case of the infliction of personal punishment. Moreover, the association of nations in legally regulated intercourse was a task which, under the promptings of utility and strengthened by the power of sympathy, was undertaken quite independently of Christianity. But the whole range of this task was first of all recognised in the idea of the Kingdom of God (Gal. iii. 28), and felt to be one that must be undertaken. Of course, even in the Christian world international law has only gradually been evolved; limited in its range, and uncertain in its operation. But a glance at history convinces us that it would be unjust and ungrateful to depreciate the value of what has been gained. The inclination to do this is intelligible from the fact that all the progress made in international law has not been able to eliminate war, its contradictory. And who is there

who would not share the yearning of the friends of peace that international courts could decide not merely the insignificant but also the serious matters of differences between nations? But the complete powerlessness to which, in the sight of all the world, an arbitration court set up with a solemnity never before heard of, at the close of the nineteenth century, was doomed, by the outbreak immediately afterwards of the South African war, and afterwards of the war between Japan and Russia, clearly enough illustrates the error in the calculations of the value of such settlements. That war is antagonistic to the Kingdom of God, "which is righteousness, peace, and joy," is shown even in the Old Testament prophecy of the transformation of "the sword into a ploughshare and the spear into a pruning-hook"; that war arises from sinfulness—Evangelical ethics has no need to dwell upon such truths. The question needs to be brought to this test:—Is it proper under the earthly conditions of this world of sin for Christians to serve in war and for Christian rulers to engage in war? The affirmative of the Augsburg Confession (Art. 16),<sup>1</sup> unaccompanied by any limiting clause, suffices to justify it, in which the clearness of the distinction between real war and litigation is remarkable, while both regarded as justifiable. Not merely ought the conscience of the individual Christian to be assured, and not his conscience, so to say, included—in an unevangelical way—in that of the ruling authorities (however certain it is that each ought to feel that the duty of military service is embraced in the idea of his obedience to those authorities), but also the decisive question whether war is justifiable under certain circumstances ought to be set clearly before us. This question is to be answered in the affirmative, because the state itself is part of God's good order—that is, specifically, inasmuch as the true 'Good,' completely ethical love, cannot be realised in the Kingdom of God in its earthly progress save on the assumption that there is such a thing as 'right' and law, and that this is part of the unimpeachable ordering of the state. If the Christian may consciously will the existence of a state for

<sup>1</sup> P. 175, *Sylloge Confessionum*—"jure bellare, militare." Cf. the Articles of the Church of England (No. xxxvii.).—TR.



the sake of the Kingdom of God, then he must along with this, as means for the Kingdom of God, will the means for the preservation of the state. There is no such thing as the power of penal law over other states; the only means a state has for maintaining its own rights is by war, the last resource for its own protection, since the right of legal punishment is confined within the limits of each state. The friends of peace at any price say that such a proposition sanctions the jesuitical principle that 'the end sanctifies the means,' or more accurately, if the end is allowable, the means are allowable. We showed earlier that this principle is not unchristian (if we leave the loose word 'allowable' aside (*cf.* p. 241)); but its jesuitical application is inadmissible. A nation to which the preservation of the individual life is of higher importance than the future of the whole is no fit agent of the Kingdom of God, which puts to each individual questions as to the value of his own personal life. And even the undeniable moral mischiefs of war are less than that involved in endangering the foundation of the highest Good, which consists in the training power of a legally ordered state. If, in this question, anyone should appeal to the words of the Sermon on the Mount, then what has been previously said is applicable here. Its explanations of the absolute command of love are only apprehended and carried out in their entirety by him who asks how he ought to apply them in any single case (p. 209). At the same time, all is contained in them that is always properly insisted on by those who accept the proposition of the Augsburg Confession for conscience' sake, and not merely that they may find excuse for the sad fact of war; namely, that war can only be justifiable as the very last means for the settlement of a national disagreement. The final decision is in every separate case a difficult duty for the rulers of a nation; on which point what has been said on the question of conflict of duties (p. 223) may be referred to. In general, it can simply be said that the only thing that justifies war is when the honour and liberty of a nation are at stake; not vain desire of conquest, and certainly not the extension of the Christian religion. But it is morally indifferent who overtly begins the war; to anticipate the inevitable is the duty of a

statesman ; the law of the country, right or wrong, really settles this point. Then, while war itself is between foes, yet, so far as the purpose of war is not imperilled, the command of love to our neighbour is to be obeyed, and history has some pathetic examples of its applicability. The moral effects are various, according to the character of the nation and its previous condition, and according to the duration and course of the war ; various, too, as regards individuals. And first and last—the purpose of war is peace. Let us conclude with Luther's saying : “ A good physician, when the malady is so serious and bad that he must destroy hand or ear or foot in order to save the body, appears to be a cruel man,” and, “ To kill a little while is better than without end.”

*Politics.*

Similar difficulties arise at times in the department of politics. For forming a judgment on politics the same principle points the way, *i.e.* the right estimate of the state in its relation to the Kingdom of God. Even in a state of peace international relations, even of nations most closely connected, are nearly always a battle of opposing interests. Doubly so when new and energetic nations assert themselves in the arena of history, or old nations develop new powers. Then, provided those nations desire to show themselves Christians, along with their privileges grow their duties. The German nation stands in the midst of the tasks presented to the ‘greater Germany.’ Is it right for Europeans to push out into various parts of the world, and drive out their savage or civilised inhabitants ? And if self-preservation demands it, and the higher civilisation fostered justifies it, under what conditions ? Surely only if the African is taught to work ; higher ideals brought to the Chinese, with the destruction of their self-complacent dreaminess ; and the best is brought to both, the Gospel ; and if, above all, the country does not itself sink down to the lower level of civilisation of past times. And at home we must not grudge our best powers even when, as has long been the case in missionary operations, it is only by serious sacrifice that a foundation for the future can be laid ; and we must foster our connection with

the pioneers of this future, in all departments, even as a Church. A manifold and hard task, but an undeniable duty. No mere talk about historical development can dispense from it, nor any criticism of the faults of other nations.

On the field of internal politics the question of revolution has been discussed above in connection with state law. But national politics are generally not less disturbed by ethical difficulties than international. Is it right to say that it is mostly merely a battle for power; a struggle of various classes and conditions of men in the nation for the extension of their own rights? and far from being a battle of ethical ideals? It is true that in academical discussion the truth is underestimated that politics is never anything else but a struggle of forces. But that 'but' does not correspond to the whole reality. Even the strongest upholders of that statement must allow that each single person can wage the warfare ethically or unethically, and ought to carry it on without barbarism or malice. This would have no meaning unless the battle were somehow a struggle for righteousness. Of course ethical ideas will be victorious in the battle with natural forces only by making these forces subservient to its ends; but even all the most powerful instincts can produce no permanent results, if they will not submit to a leading of these ideas. This may be said to be the teaching of history, unless we are to regard ethical ideas themselves as merely the reactions of the wills of the oppressed, as weapons in the battle with force—that is, unless the moral is to be altogether denied, and we are to turn to the 'devaluation of all values' (*cf.* p. 25). Where this does not happen, it will be considered a matter for special congratulation that the greatest of practical statesmen, in contrast to the Macchiavellian ideal (the union of the lion and the fox), has with special impressiveness given his testimony to the importance of moral imponderables generally, and the ideas of Christian ethics in particular. In short, the idea widely diffused of late that the Christian theory is not adequate to settle every question in human life is conceivable enough under the pressure of modern problems (over-population, colonisation, conflict of industrial interests, fleets), but only ethically justifiable as an incentive to

overcome the difficulties, and as the most urgent cry—Upwards ! and so forwards !

### THE CHURCH.

It is only in Christian ethics that the religious community has such independence alongside the domestic life, society, industrial life, art and science, law, that it may find its place at the conclusion of social ethics. Everywhere else this position is assigned to the state or, perhaps, to socialism, in its theory of the industrial problem. In Christian ethics the Church is given the position of a form of society intended to minister directly to the highest end, the Kingdom of God. But if conscious Christian conviction itself has denied that the Church in its transcendent value is properly employable as a means for the whole social development, then this is a call to us to define the nature of the Church in the simplest possible way, so that judgment on this point may not be prejudiced.

#### *The Nature of the Church.*

The religious life, like all psychical life, seeks for utterance. It cannot exist alone, but will share itself with others. The instinct to express our own inner life to others may be selfish ; we heighten our own self-respect. All such self-disclosure is moral when others may be enriched by it. This in its higher stages is the pressure of the Christian life to find expression. It is blest in having its own sanctuary ; in being alone with God, who—Himself a Spirit, eternal personal love—raises the created spirit into loving fellowship with Himself ; but as a child of God in the Kingdom of God. To be alone with God in a way which excludes others from God would not be fellowship with God who is love. Gratitude for God's love, joy in God, expresses itself for God's honour and our neighbours' benefit ; otherwise it would not be to the praise and glory of God, who is love. Therefore the spiritual life of the Christian is constrained to fellowship. "Each tells another that he lives." And this fellowship in mutual religious influence and reciprocated benefits is the Church. More precisely, this is the ethical meaning of the word Church. The dogmatic meaning of the



Church is that it is the fellowship of the faithful called into existence by the Spirit of God through His Gospel. We believe that "God's Word cannot be without God's people," that the Word always produces faith, and that "God's people cannot be without God's Word" (Luther); but there is continually in this Word the power of faith and so of life. In short, in dogmatics the Church is the communion of the faithful, and so that their faith is the work of God and the instrument of God; in ethics it is the communion of faithful men in such a way that their faith is regarded as of their own act. This is no contradiction, provided that what has been said of the working of the divine on the human will is right. It is precisely thus, and by this means, that the fellowship of the faithful is God's work and instrument, because it suffers itself to be made God's work and instrument. But the two significations of the term Church must be distinguished, if in all that follows we are to avoid obscurity in every direction by confounding them. The German is apt too easily to think of the word Church and of the Church in its ethical sense, and indeed for the most part of an idea of the Church still more secondary—if he does not in the end think merely of the parson and the church buildings—and consequently fails to comprehend how in the Creed it can be called 'the Holy Catholic Church.' Some destroy the consolation of this article, and only too easily put their confidence, in a false way, in the Church as it presents itself in human self-activity, or even merely in the forms of law. Therefore even Luther stumbled at the word 'Church,' and preferred to speak of a 'holy Christian people'; 'of Christendom'; of 'the flock' of those who hearken to the voice of the Good Shepherd. But as anyhow that meaning of the word is firmly embedded in the Creed, we must be content with drawing attention to the ever-recurring danger of confounding the two meanings.

*The Church as a Special Organisation.*

Nevertheless, have we not been too hasty in asserting that the undeniable promptings of the religious life to give itself expression is the sufficient reason for a special religious community,

the Church in the ethical sense of the term? May not that prompting be just as well, or better, satisfied if it find expression in other social spheres? And the present question is not that the Church has in course of time given up to others a number of the useful activities with which it at one time occupied itself—sometimes because it must, at other times of its own initiative; as, for instance, questions of jurisprudence to the state, as well as the care of the school and of the poor; but the question really is whether, since the influence of Christianity on the spirit of the nation is increasing, religion cannot sufficiently display itself in its conduct in worldly spheres, and perhaps with more depth and purity? An unbiassed consideration of a danger which is not merely incidentally but necessarily implicated in any specialised advocacy of religious interests—that is to say, the danger of materialisation and secularisation—may easily incline us to answer the question affirmatively. This is easier for the consciousness of the present generation than many friends of the Church will credit, when without more ado they consider aloofness from the Church equivalent to estrangement from Christianity itself. Those who would shirk the seriousness of this question must have forgotten the attitude our Lord took to His Church, in that His severest woes were not on the world but on those who were by their vocation the defenders of the religion of the day. For instance, an attractive picture may be drawn of the power of the Gospel in the confidential circle of the family and in friendship, and an inspiring description painted how in the social circles of a common calling there may be the common care for religious interests; how religion may be constituted into a bond of fellowship governing all, and having the real and simple tone of true piety. And yet the question is to be answered in the negative. The greatest advocates of the proposition of Rothe that the Church, although indispensable at the commencement, and even during long eras of development, ought to recognise that its greatest work is to make itself unnecessary, to work downwards into other social forms, and train them in its spirit, have never been able to dispose of the objection that, so long as resistance to the Kingdom of God exists, only a special

organisation is in a position to give proper expression to the Gospel of this Kingdom for each generation; to bring itself to bear on all the spheres of human life; to offer itself for full acceptance by all, for all their duties; to secure unimpaired transmission from one generation to another. In regard to its character and origin the Kingdom of God in its strictest meaning is not of this world, certain though it be that its task is the subjugation of the world. If the Church is not to be secularised, then its witness must assert itself consciously and designedly as the witness of God's eternal counsel of love, and of the revelation of Himself in time. The Church, therefore, is the organisation which exclusively exists for the Kingdom of God; the most necessary and most direct means for its highest End. In this lies its dignity, and in this too its danger. It stands nearest to the throne, and therefore it is pledged to remain the farthest from all merely earthly dealings. And its greatest danger is to imagine that it is itself the Kingdom of God; whereas it only ministers along with the other social spheres to the Kingdom of God, although occupying the highest place. So long as that imagination ensnares it, it becomes more even than the rest a contradiction of the Kingdom of God. Even a small ideal state is still a state; a profoundly secularised Church is only a simulacrum of the Church. But so long and so far as it honestly recognises its special danger and bravely fights against it, it ought to be considered as the divinely appointed and chief handmaid of this Kingdom, and it will draw ever new power for the fulfilment of its tasks even out of temporary decline, and out of all its deficiencies and weaknesses.

If we are to rightly answer the question whether Jesus founded the Church, we must keep this spiritual necessity in view. The word 'founded' is in any case an inaccurate term, and fixes our attention on external ordering. But we may say 'willed,' or, at any rate that it follows necessarily from His will. To speak parabolically:—The Kingdom of God is not merely compared to leaven, but also to the good seed which is always alike possessed of vital power, and is to be sown in the hearts of successive generations. And if the Lord purposely spoke of

His death at the institution of the Lord's Supper, then He desires the preservation of this witness of Him, which is the highest end for which the Christian 'congregation of faithful men' exists, and which it can only realise as a Church. Can it then be a matter of surprise that express, although only few, words have been handed down to us about this congregation, the Church? (St Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17); and that, ere long, the world saw a Church in its midst, small in its numbers, but powerful in operation, in all parts of the Empire; *one* without externally organised unity; independent in a way no religious society ever was previously; confronting all other social circles, and in particular the state; the power of the future?

### *The Church's Task.*

It is important to define the task of the Church more closely. This is necessary since the whole Christian life flows from faith; because in Christianity it is not as in imperfect religions, where only a particular part of conduct is definitely religious. Hence it is, conversely, not so simple to delimit the action proper to the religious community, the Church, as such—that is to say, according to the Evangelical conception. The Catholic identifies the Church with the Kingdom of God; for it in principle all Christian action is churchly, and all other social spheres are properly only closer or remoter constituents of the religious sphere, the Church. The great principle which we as Evangelical Christians must carry out on all sides cannot be other than the above-mentioned one; and also in the carrying out of this a larger amount of agreement prevails than is sometimes supposed, when thinking only of the variety of artificial phrases used. Some call the Church 'a fellowship in the worship of God'; others name it after its most important element as 'a fellowship of prayer'; others, 'a fellowship in a common creed,' or even of a common creed and common prayer; others again emphasise in these activities in a special way the battle for the truth and for love in a world of deceit and sin. All agree that it is concerned with the expression of the religious inner life, and therefore with a common religious participation



and mutual interest in this highest end. All other things, which possibly the Church includes in its own sphere of work, are not its true tasks; it is precisely as a Church that it is called to its true work in contradistinction to other forms of society. But this may properly be expressed, and in the simplest way, by the word 'confession of faith'; always supposing that by this term every idea of the special meaning which it has acquired in the course of history is excluded, and above all the 'confession' which is theologically formulated, however important it may be in its right place. In the New Testament the word 'confess' is used variously. It is the honouring of God in prayer. It means, to profess before men that we belong to the Lord; it is to acknowledge His unique dignity as the Lord, the Son of God, and so forth. The common element of all these things is that it is concerned with the expression of the inner life, which is wrought in us by God, by His revelation; with the human response, in some way, made to God's word, whether in the form chiefly of uttering the thought which is stirred in us by devotional absorption in this word, or in the direct witness for God of the spiritual life created by His Word. It is not solitary, but consists in mutual interchange of giving to others, and receiving in turn from them; nor is the utterance of the lips excluded, fitting in with the principle of the saying, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"; and thus the confession of the whole life is indispensable. But this in itself does not exactly describe the immediate task of the Church.

### *Worship.*

This confession of faith, as descriptive of the nature of the Church's activity, puts its impress on all other of its activities in accordance with the various needs of men; and, in this way, the purpose for which the Church exists is clearly illustrated. In the forefront stands divine worship. There "our dear Lord speaks with us and we with Him" (Luther). The two main parts of it are the ministry of the Word of God, and prayer. In both the Church confesses her faith which God begets by His Word, His revelation. Both the Word and prayer are

ministered by her as a Christian assembly, all with each other and for each other's sake. The purpose of this solemnisation of divine worship is edification. It is not a contradiction to assert that worship has an end, and that this end is edification. For we do not mean an end external to the worship, as, for instance, when in heathen religions the gracious response of the deity is sought by sacrifice; certainly not worldly ends. And that edification is the purpose of divine worship follows from the nature of the Christian worship of God. Every external expression of the internal life stimulates it; the Christian expression of its life helps forward that Christian life which consists in communion with the God of holy love; and therein, in the love of our neighbour. For this the word edification is particularly appropriate. From all the formality of former worship of God the Christian holds aloof; is mindful of the true temple of God, the Kingdom of God, in which each individual is himself a temple of God. It has nothing weak about it, as if it only meant an awakening of sweet, fleeting emotions. It builds with earnest seriousness and not on sand. Its solemnity is not a mere presentation of what already exists, a sweet repose without enrichment of spiritual energy. So the discussion as to single items of the worship of God, such as the value of preaching, is mere wordy strife; to ask, for instance, whether it is only a presentation in discourse of the living faith already existing in the Church, or its main purpose is to awaken that faith. It is always both these things, when we consider what faith is; and it is always both for the benefit of all. Of course time, place, preacher, hearers may give a different tone to one element or the other. The same thing may be said of the so-called apologetic preaching. The proposition widely current, yet often unproven, that Christian ceremonial is not intended to influence God, here finds its limits. It is obvious that it receives all its force from the gracious nearness of God; while heaven-storming and God-compelling prayer has as little proper place in the congregation as in the life of the godly man. But God's grace opens up a living intercourse; and it is only unbelief that would desire to draw external boundary-lines to the believing prayer of the Church (St Luke xviii. 8).

*Form of Divine Worship.*

Finally, the question as to the form of divine worship receives its answer when we have thus settled its content and purpose. Every expression of the interior life somehow goes back on art (p. 391). It is always a mistake when art is suspected as a means of religious utterance. But the mistake is intelligible, because this means is thought too highly of when full justice is not done to the genius of our religion as the expression of life. It is accordant with its spiritual and ethical character that oratory and music chiefly claim notice as artistic means of expression; while the arts of painting and sculpture take a less prominent place. The case naturally stands otherwise where truth and where will are of less importance than they are in the Evangelical Church.

To this context of divine worship belongs, in accord with its idea—quite irrespective of all legal regulations—the observation of Sunday, so far as it is merely a rest day (p. 413) and serves the need of regularly recurring and assured times for worship convenient for the majority. Rest finds its highest expression in common prayer, and the rest day is sanctified in a special sense by the Word of God and prayer; as Luther has explained in the Large Catechism, most purely according to the sense of our Church. But the Church is not merely the fellowship of divine worship. Pastoral care satisfies the special needs of individuals, whether they are able to participate in worship or not. For the rising generation the Church uses Christian catechetical instruction. To non-Christian nations it brings the Gospel as a missionary Church, and it seeks to win afresh the estranged masses by the so-called home missions. It needs no further detail to show how the Church in these special forms of activity gives special expression to the above-mentioned main ideas.

When we are clear why it is that religious action is a matter specially belonging to a society, and in what accordingly its nature and end consist, then in principle it is granted that this society, the Church, will in its earthly development be subject to legal regulations. This admission has often been challenged

even by Christians of to-day ; not merely in the Middle Ages, when canon law bound the Gospel in fetters ; not merely in the bloom of Protestant state-churchism, when pietism protested against it ; but at the present time prominence on the juristic side has been given to the statement ‘that law and religion are antithetic.’ It was, it is said, through a pretended divine ecclesiastical law that primitive Christianity was catholicised ; it was through human law that the Church of the Reformation was secularised ; it was through rationalism, which undermined faith in the Holy Scriptures, that the Church grew into a religious union without divine foundation and without eternal power. In the beginning, say they, it was different ; the apostolical period knew no canon law in the Church. Accordingly, the Evangelical Church ought to be reformed after this original model, as the men who introduced these ecclesiastical laws under the compulsion of need themselves demanded for the deepest reasons, that is, the Reformers. Nay, say they, did not Luther complain that the people were not in its favour, and that the danger was imminent that the jurists would bring back popery into the Church ?

No Evangelical Christian will fail to acknowledge the seriousness of such considerations. How is that which is the freest, that which springs up from the soul itself ; how is the revelation of the personal religious life as a confession of faith (see above) to be bound to the forms of law ? Does not the “Spirit blow where it listeth” ? Is it not sinful to “quench the Spirit” ? It is certain that such opinions in the Evangelical Church cannot but have the result of completely sweeping away the Roman leaven of thinking too highly of law in a religious society. When we were attempting to establish the majesty of law in general we insisted at the same time on the fact that it was a derived majesty, a majesty borrowed from the ethical sphere. Here it is only needful to draw the inference in relation to the special nature of the Church. The nearer the rest of the social circles stand to the highest End, the less important is the claim of law on them ; least of all then on the Church, the immediate handmaid of the Kingdom of God. In her case the law, which is always the servant of the higher, is completely the servant of that hand-



maid of the Highest. If now the special purpose of the Church is the service of the Gospel, then all Church law must minister to the general, sure, pure, powerful, free annunciation of the Gospel. It can never claim to be divine law, but merely a means; and is therefore changeable according to the needs of each time in order to subserve the one eternal End. But it is a means indispensable for the Church precisely for the same reasons that it is indispensable for all other moral forms of the common social life in order that freedom may be able to prevail as freedom, neither arbitrarily limited nor arbitrary in itself; and at the same time subserve the purpose of a means of training for the recognition of common ends (*cf.* p. 136). Whatever form of Church activity may be thought of, so soon as we subject it to careful examination we have no alternative but to admit that it cannot secure permanence in the absence of regulations. The place, the times of divine service, of prayer and of preaching require some kind of recognised regulations unless continual confusion is to arise. It is quite the same with all other expressions of Church life, for the simple reason that in the absence of any established regulations men cannot profitably work together. It is further necessary, and in this case most undoubtedly so, because in this sphere far more than in others there is need to show that laws and regulations are but means for the expression of that love which is ever ready to serve.

### *The 'Churches.'*

When once the importance of law for the Church has been realised, it is then possible to understand some other most important questions of detail. There are chiefly four which are closely connected with questions of law. These are the multiplicity of churches, the clerical office, the constitution of the Church, Church and State. The number of the churches is chiefly conditioned by the variety of the organisations. Now, when law in the Church takes the position above assigned to it, then the variety in legal forms is a ground of external but not for internal division, and certainly not for strife. It is only when law is thought too highly of that the latter is conceivable, and even on that very account reprehensible. Our

judgment must be the same over geographical, national, and political distinctions, inasmuch as, as is perfectly natural, the variety of laws have their foundation in such differences. The matter is not so simple of treatment when the question is one that concerns a different conception of the Gospel. So far, indeed, as this different conception has its roots in the special gifts and the special history of a nation, this is only a proof of the universality and inexhaustibility of the Gospel; and it is, again, not to be lost sight of how in that a reason for separation may be supposed to lie. On the other hand, the progress so far of Christian knowledge awakens the hope that once more newly won nations will gain a new glimpse into special aspects of the "inexhaustible riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8), and will offer their fresh knowledge for the enrichment of the older Christianity; since it would be strange if missions should hand over the dogmatic result of the religion of their own home, with its different character and history, as if it were an inviolable Good. But of course if the knowledge of the Gospel, in its original purity, is corrupted, then separation is a duty, and faithful adherence to known truth required; and even more, honest and sincere battle for it is demanded, which is at the same time the only sure means for overcoming error and sin; whereas to disguise the disagreements injures both parties, and the cause of truth itself. This is our Evangelical judgment on the Church disruption of the sixteenth century. But how this judgment is to extend to detail needs the most careful examination, and undeniably the separation of churches has in the course of history very often been the consequence of sin, of guilty exaggeration of differences into antagonisms, of holy zeal into the strife of envy. The last words of our Lord, "that they may be one," do not of course, in the first instance, refer to regularly constituted churches, but to the fellowship of believers; yet the application of their meaning does refer to them also and to them in particular. The separation of nations is morally justifiable in a much wider degree than of churches. There was even a period when the saying, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," was largely truth (Eph. iv. 4), in spite of the potent differences existing in Jewish Christendom. So our

aim should not be the constant, inopportune, and even dishonest smoothing over of differences, but to understand the character of others, and to seek unity in common work, where this is possible without compromising truth. As an obvious indication of union, united communions of all Evangelical churches in the Lord's Supper ought no longer to be neglected, unless that saying, "Even to Christian churches the exhortation is needful: Love one another," is to be felt to be a bitterly shameful truth. This first aim, as well as many others, will be reached so much the more easily the less suspicion is awakened by attempts at unions on the basis of Church polity, that seem more concerned with the advantages of a single church organisation than the welfare of the Church of Christ. Perhaps the common foe will bring about what the yearning of piety has so long only imperfectly effected.

When we speak of many 'churches,' then it is time to ask, What do you mean by a 'sect'? The use of the term is various. For instance, ought our Evangelical state churches<sup>1</sup> to call the great Baptist community to which a Spurgeon belonged a 'sect,' or the Methodists in America? And supposing we do not so call them, but churches, do we do so merely on account of their numbers? Is that a sufficient reason? And are not also our Evangelical churches in Germany called sects by the Roman Church? When carefully noted, these facts at once give the answer. From the Roman standpoint the term has a clear sense without further explanation. For it, the Church in its true character is not a community of faith in the Gospel, but consists in unity of organisation, of creed, and of sacraments. On this assumption every Christian community is a sect which is separate from its hierarchy, with the Pope at its head. For us Protestants the word sect means first of all such a religious community as is separate from the churches recognised by the state for any reason whatever. The ground of separation may be organisation, or mode of worship, or doctrine, and yet its

<sup>1</sup> On the special state arrangements of the 'Landeskirche,' in which corporate rights and state recognition on the basis of an Evangelical confession of faith belong to distinct communions, see article *sub voce*, *Theologisches Universal Lexicon*. It is to such special conditions that much of the foregoing and the following explanations have reference.—TR.

character such that the Evangelical Church idea remains unaffected; therefore only misconception can deny the name 'Church.' The case is altered if a Christian community sets up the claim that it is in its external limits a 'church of the saints,' which includes in its membership only the 'perfect,' the 'truly converted.' This claim resolves itself into self-delusion. In this sense the early Christian churches were not 'holy' churches, as any glance into the Pauline epistles shows; certain though it may be that, compared with later times, they shone in the splendour of their first faith, and certain too as it is that no church ought to be without discipline. The matter is one of principle, and it is plain that men cannot make a pure church; only God is the searcher of hearts. Supposing that a single church was at a definite period composed of pure Christians, the uprise of a fresh generation would necessarily compromise this position. What the Lord says, first of all, of the Kingdom of God in its earthly form, "Let both grow together until the harvest" (St Matt. xiii. 29), applies necessarily also to the Church and the churches (Conf. Augsburg, Art. 7 and 8).<sup>1</sup> Such a claim of purity of membership rests, therefore, on a different conception of the Gospel; not on any subordinate point or mere theological formulas, but on a difference of view of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in relation to the notion of the Church. And that it depends on this, those who believe that they rightly apprehend what the Church is under our conditions, in the meaning of the Lord of the Church, may make clear by employing the terms 'sect' in contradistinction to 'Church.' This may be done without censorious self-satisfaction and with mindfulness of the many transitions which real life shows. The communities above alluded to are 'churches' in England and America, not by reason of their numbers, but because they in the succession of generations necessarily have to recognise the task of religious training, and because they, in the same proportion, have been compelled to put the idea of 'churches of saints' behind that

<sup>1</sup> *Sylloge Confessionum*, Confessio Augustana, p. 125, 'De Ecclesia' and 'Quid sit Ecclesia.' Cf. Articles of Church of England, Art. xxvi. On the relation between these articles and those of Cranmer, etc., cf. Campion and Beaumont, *Prayer Book Interleaved*.—TR.



of fellowship in the Word of God and in faith. Among us, however, they are, in the mass, sects when they attack the churches historically grown into what they are on account of their 'mixed character'; a thing they cannot themselves escape when they have a longer history behind them, unless at the cost of separating themselves from the living current of history and sinking into the sands of despicable self-seclusion. This is exactly what we often mean by the word 'sectarian.' It scarcely needs proof that such sects may bring blessing to the Church, particularly by their example of care in personal fellowship on the one hand, and on the other hand by showing that the 'churches' may with good reason lay stress on the conviction that they do express the ideas of the Church in the truly Evangelical sense; for the urgency for visible holiness has finally, on the part of the Evangelical, some sort of relation to the Roman idea of the Church. In any case, for all these reasons the accurate use of the term 'sect' is a proof of an accurate understanding of the Evangelical idea of the Church.

### *The Clerical Office.*

One of the most important ethical problems of Church law, properly speaking, is that of the clerical office. The objections spoken of above against 'law' in the Church return in an accentuated form when we turn our attention to this subject. One objection is easy of refutation which asserts that, because the witness and confession of faith is a universal Christian duty, therefore in the divine worship of the Church the office ought to be exercised at any time by all without distinction. This assertion forgets the distinction between those who lead and those who are led; or, quite generally, between the active and receptive mind, which is one founded in the nature of the religious as of the mental life; and it is a clear misconception to appeal to the saying that we are "all taught of God" applied in this way. St Paul insists that there are "diversities of gifts," and even the mental dispositions of the self-same gifted persons vary. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (St James v. 13). But the thought is not easily disposed of:—If all that be admitted, ought not freedom

to remain unfettered by the restriction of law at least in this innermost, central point of Church action? May it not be thought that the time and place of the worship of the congregation is really all that refers, in connection with it, to that which belongs to the earthly and to be subject to regulation; but prayer and the ministry of the Word really belong to the moving of the Spirit? He who has never suffered under the arrangements of divine worship from the official leader of devotion, and the preacher, the formularies of prayer, the long set discourse, and the passivity of the congregation, is hardly capable of a judgment. But he whom such a doubt has pained—and is it possible that in our time a thoughtful member of the Church could remain free from such a doubt?—ought in justice not to weaken the consideration whether these evils are not actually necessary for our earthly development, because they are less than those evils which would arise if the opponent of law and order were allowed to pave the way for freedom as he understands it. An honest personal examination of the historical evidences of the early Church will dispose to caution. We see in the New Testament accounts only what is different from our customs, and see the bright side. As if, for instance, in the warnings of the great advocate of freedom (1 Cor. xiv.), plain traces of order did not manifest themselves, which a little later become the beginnings of regulated order following on necessarily changing conditions. This must happen provided the principle of edification is to be carried through, which was maintained as applicable even in those still untrammelled conditions of the early Church. From the free operation of the gifts of grace there soon arose permanent service; and when the charismata were no longer found active in their original universality and variety, then the perceptible need ever present pointed the way to a settled order of divine service. But what happened to the Church as a whole may often be proved most instructively in smaller religious areas. And then the friend of freedom will recognise, not from the force of custom but from conviction, the necessity of regulated forms in this region. On one side the question is as to the application of the fundamental idea which determines why all the moral action of the community must be subject to the rule of law.

But in this present issue there are other special reasons that come under notice. One is that, in such delicate matters as prayer and preaching of the Gospel, the sins of conceit and desire of power in the most spiritual form are especially sinful and especially dangerous. At least a part of the danger is avoided by a recognised order. The person is so far disburdened of responsibility that a sincere man, even with only an average measure of gifts and experience, can bear it. In addition, the nature of the Christian Church, directly it has a history behind it, renders a special training essential for giving religious expression to its truth. The Sacred Scriptures are written in strange languages, and in order to understand them aright the harvest of the centuries must be garnered. The changing spirit of the times does indeed never require another Gospel, but the old eternal Gospel must be adapted to it. It is not as if the promise of the Holy Spirit were given to theologians more than to others. But because the Holy Spirit is not an indefinite religious influence, although a deeply moving energy, but the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and because the Spirit and the Word are closely connected, He works by means of knowledge and is the Spirit of 'sevenfold wisdom.' And if this wisdom is not to degenerate into fanaticism it must, although not that alone, include a knowledge of the historical conditions under which it has pleased God to reveal His eternal love, and also of the conditions under which this revelation is to show itself ever new and ever adaptable—in other words, a theology is indispensable.

For all these reasons we stand by the conviction of our Reformers that a regular call is needed for the ministry of the Word; and of course the appropriate preparation for it. And when it is once acknowledged that the service of the Church is a special vocation, it is impossible to see why this service should not guarantee to the agent the means of subsistence (1 Cor. ix. 7). Those who take objection to this for the most part find no difficulty if their favourite leaders have an assured means of livelihood by their 'free gifts.' The warning to the Evangelical Churches that a luxurious ministry is for them as unworthy as it is dangerous is entirely justifiable. But apart from exceptions the time is not yet come in which the servants of the Church are

placed in such a position of independence that the danger of being overwhelmed by earthly anxiety is not nearer than that by luxury.

All that has been here said in favour of the rightness of a special ministerial office in the Evangelical Church would be false if at the same time (as amongst ourselves should be obvious) it were not unreservedly recognised that office is service, service in the Gospel, and service in the Gospel on behalf of the Church. If all legal regulations are finally merely means, so are especially all Church regulations, and among these particularly that of the ministerial office. It must stand by Luther's word—this office has not “the status of a priest in itself, but it is a common public office for those who are all priests, *i.e.* Christians.” They fulfil their service not as over the Church, but in its name and in its stead. It is therefore of ‘divine right’ only so far as it is essential to the edification of the Church. Therein lies its authority, only there. All claims, however cautiously put forward, that higher qualities are imparted to the bearers of this office than are given to the community of believers themselves are Romish, not Evangelical. The value of ordination is measured by this principle. It has its justification in a regularly ordered Church; but the remembrance that, *e.g.*, in Würtemberg in the time of the Suabian Fathers there was no ordination, may save us from making too much of it.

### *Church Organisation.*

On the border-line of ethics stands a judgment on various forms of Church organisation. On account of the smaller importance which law has for the Church as a community than for other forms of society, the Church can perform her special tasks with different forms of constitution equally as well as the State her tasks, whether by a constitutional monarchy or an unlimited democracy. The personal factors are of the most importance. Of course it is not a mere matter of indifference what the constitution of a church is. But there is greater danger in making too much of constitutional questions than in the fact that the organisation may not yet be wholly conformable to the needs of the Church. The witness for the



faith for the sake of which it exists can be in every way borne by her whether the constitution is episcopal, or presbyterian, or consistorial, or a mixture of these principal possibilities. For the Evangelical, provided the notion of the clerical office above given is a correct one, these are one and all merely human arrangements, matters of convenience. For Rome, on the other hand, the constitution of the Church is a matter of faith, because the priesthood is a divine order in the Church and over it. The Consistorial (originally Lutheran) and the Presbyteral synods (originally the reformed government of the Church) probably suit on the whole our historically evolved needs. But these forms of constitution do not guarantee the guidance of the Church on Evangelical lines, because the synods are specially prone to the inclination to make the Church a part of the constitutional state order, with the accompanying danger of its radically foreign domination in the Church. And the self-importance of many orators tends easily to making too much of the synods, to the injury of their true value. The governance of the Church rests far more than that of the state on confidence in the rulers: in this case essentially on the confidence of the synods in the consistories that their naturally conservative bias is only for the good of the Church, *i.e.* has exclusively the advancement of the Gospel in view; and on the confidence of the consistories in the synods that their naturally forward policy has the same end. The rôles may be reversed. But it is only when—in whatever direction movement is taken—both these springs of action of the spiritual life secure representation that the whole synodal institution has meaning and so real authority. It is the task of both parties to take pains by careful electoral arrangements to put the synods in the position of exercising this legitimate authority. The suppression of minorities is plainly fatal.

#### *Relation of Church to the State.*

The constitution of the Church is with us well known to be most intimately connected with and related to the state. It is here sufficient to recall the statements made on 'the Christian State,' and now note them from the point of view of the

Church as we there did from that of the state. The dominance of the Church over the state was there ruled out chiefly for the sake of the state. Now, after having become better acquainted with the nature of the Church, it is just as clear that the latter, when it makes disturbing encroachments on the proper province of the state, and the national civilisation fostered and represented by it, then the Church no less does injury to itself, dissipates its energies, departs from its true vocation, as the Roman Church proves. As above, the domination of the state over the Church was to be avoided for the Church's own sake, because it fails to possess the powers necessary to a direct solution of ecclesiastical problems, and damages its true power by a wrong use of them. So in the present instance it is perfectly plain that the Church injures its own work by such encroachments. How can there be a state-ordered witness of faith? Has not the saying that religious men are hypocrites or fools a strong support in the actual or supposed ease with which the Church trims her sails to the breezes blowing from a lofty quarter? Hence it is intelligible why the panacea of a 'free church in a free state' is greeted as the end of all difficulties. If only its operation were as clear as the formula! If it were not that on all sides there were points of contact and friction-surfaces which present, and cannot but present, themselves. Ought not the state to desire guarantees against any church receiving its citizens under rules recognisable as against the state order? against the subordination of obedience to its authority to obedience to ecclesiastical superiors?—as, for instance, when an episcopal oath is demanded in relation to the Pope which contradicts that to the ruler of the country? And ought the state to be indifferent to the power influencing the mind of its citizens either as regards that which is a danger to the Church or that which is for its great good? Similarly, can the Church conceal the fact that its influence on the whole life of a nation is not merely greater but more answerable to the whole conditions of its work if the state helps its activity by affording special protection to its arrangements, and even more by handing over a portion of its activity, especially on the wide and far-reaching field of its civilising work, particularly the

schools? Whether, of course, the gain or the loss would be the greater it is impossible to state definitely—whether, for instance, the much-explained section 166 of our statute law ought to be repealed. This is a point which only historical development can decide in the long run; but at every juncture the particular attitude of the representatives of the Church and of the state, that is, in the last resort, the disposition of those men's minds who rule Church and state alike, will settle the points. Every fancy that it is possible to 'bring religion to the people from above' is met by profound mistrust and passive resistance to such attempts. Still, nothing is in vain which plainly flows from a sincere heart, whether from above or from below. On one matter there should be no doubt, so far as Evangelical Christians are concerned, and that is, if, as a matter of principle, the friendly relation of Church and state is rejected, and so, as a matter of principle, the separation of Church and state is preferred, then the state is, in a way unevangelical, thought too little of, and quite as unevangelically is the Church made too much of, and confounded with the Kingdom of God itself. The state is not a something 'non-ethical' in itself, and 'the honour of the Lord' is not 'placed in jeopardy' if the guidance of the Church is closely conjoined with that of the state. This general ethical judgment may even go a step farther, and say that the freedom of the individual is in no way, as might seem to be the case, necessarily greater in a Church separated from the state, and as a matter of fact is in many cases less. For dogmatism and paltry prejudices in matters of faith naturally manifest themselves on the whole more strongly in a self-dependent Church, and all the more the less of reality there is in the religious life of the period.

#### *The National Church.*

For this reason, too, a Church standing in a closer felt relation to the state can with far more facility embrace a whole nation, be a national Church. Still more, for the great reason before given for the close union of Church and state, namely, that the educative influence of the religious community on the whole national life is better guaranteed if the Church is legally

associated with the legal order of the state. And that the national Church is a great benefit for us as Evangelicals is as clear both from the character of our Church, as it has been corroborated by a long history; the missionary Churches find themselves pointed to this goal with more clearness; and it is also forced on the attention of those who at home appear only to see the injury which, as they publicly proclaim, it does to the Church. It would be quite unevangelical to promise on this account permanence to this form of the national Church. The existence of the Church is in no way dependent on its relation to the state, neither on its firm union with it nor its dissolution, in the way both friends and foes often wrongly assert. And so we are under the necessity of mentioning a series of questions which at the present time stir the minds of men, and throw in general a clearer light on the nature of the Church in its earthly conditions. The questions that are raised are:—May the importance attaching to ‘law’ in the Church of which we have above treated be in details apprehended in other ways than that stated; and may the regulations made be altered and differently shaped in the State Church just as well as in the Free Church, of course with continually fresh application in detail? The matters really concern certain questions essential to the internal well-being of the Church.

It is with some reason that our Church hopes to deepen the sympathy of its members with the common tasks by the delimitation of congregations into smaller areas more easily attended to for the purposes of the ministry of the Word and pastoral care. The great cathedrals, to wit, are more suitable for the ceremony of the Mass than for Evangelical preaching. The Roman communion touches the individual at the confessional box. Still, we must not overlook the fact that there are shades as well as bright points in the plan also recommended by the panegyrists of this smaller congregational system of linking on to it all possible practical tasks; the care of the poor and sick, and of the young; congregations of those of the same age and social position. In this way, will not many a duty be taken away from other societies which they are better fitted to fulfil, and the highest task of the Church, its teaching function, crippled? If



it is replied that these dangers are at least not necessarily involved, while pressing tasks can only be thus accomplished in reasonable time, or not at all; and moreover without such 'Martha' labour no access to the hearts of the estranged masses for the 'Mary' labour of the Church can be gained; then in any case this assertion points to a need for the satisfaction of which even the best organisation of smaller local congregations can only be one among other plans.

What the Home Mission work can accomplish we see. Its name, 'Inner Mission,' was itself a feat, unveiling as it did the unchristian state of great masses in Christian nations. And it was a feat of saving grace in which the father of the Inner Mission proved its efficacy by his own personal and self-denying labour, and then published abroad his success without starting with high-sounding speeches as so many others. The question is worth serious consideration whether this work of home missions, in the shape which it has taken, and that one not quite in all respects in the spirit of its founder, ought not to be extended so that other social areas may be touched by it and won. If a work among 'the whole' in contradistinction to that among 'the sick' is spoken of as needed, this is not refuted by the saying of Jesus Christ, "They that are strong have no need of the physician, but they that are sick," for St Paul justifies this use of the words 'ye that are strong' and 'ye that are weak.' Both classes need the best care, and both of them, when estranged from the Gospel, must be won in different ways. The more personal the help is, the more permanent it will be, and a wide field for energy is hereby opened up.

#### *Evangelisation.*

A further means of healing the deepest wounds of this estrangement is found in 'evangelisation' or special mission work, not only by its bringing the Word and ordered services to those not ordinarily reached, but also by its effect on those who are not awakened by those ordinary means. The danger of this extraordinary means of preaching for the purpose of arousing and advancing the spiritual life of the Evangelical Church is just as evident as pertinent to draw attention to it. Exaggera-

tion on the one side, curiosity, excitement, self-delusion on the other hand, undoubtedly very frequently cleave to the management of these missions up to the present, and in fact there is a special danger attending the work itself. But the question is whether these difficulties cannot be overcome. The charge of failure cannot be proved, irrespective of the fact that the expression is very inaccurate, unless meant to apply only to the sort of effects here mentioned as questionable. The 'proving of the spirit' is of course indispensable. A man is not suitable for an evangelist or missionary because he has been proved to be unfit somehow for the ordinary work of the Church, for in this way these 'remarkable' geniuses who believe that they have 'missed their calling' may easily become a public danger. It should be absolutely demanded that these missionaries should work honourably in connection with the regularly constituted authorities of the Church, and it is in the highest degree desirable that undertakings of this kind should be carried on by those smaller societies in individual churches who have a strong sympathy with such movements.

The Evangelical Church will have to give unreserved recognition to these societies. Not by showing indulgence to them, and at the same time enslaving them because they appear to be useful instruments in Church politics, nor by calling them into existence by artificial action from above, having no root in the life of the people; but by protecting them in their freedom. The dangers that beset this work are more remote when such societies keep faithfully to the Church, and intend so to remain. In Würtemberg, *e.g.*, they form an important living portion of its history not yet adequately described and such as never can be fully described. And if some who hold aloof think more of the results on practical life, it may be pointed out that even quiet progress in knowledge, and so the growth of mutual understanding, owes much to these quietists. Personal research into Holy Scripture produces even at any stage of culture something of the nobility of the Bereans (Acts xvii. 11). Many a young clergyman has for the first time realised the meaning of intercession when he has seen his own faltering steps borne up by it. All the greater is the responsibility when such societies

are disturbed from the outside, as by theological questions—for example, in the debate over the Bible which some years ago distracted the members of the Basle Mission.

*The Supply of Clergy.*

Here another question is touched which must ever affect the Evangelical Church, and at every fresh period. It remains a final question of importance to its welfare, so far as it is an external community of religious men, a Church in the sense in which ethics takes note of it, that it shall have good clergy. Compared with this, all pains about constitution, liturgy, social arrangements are things of secondary importance. It cannot be otherwise, if it is the Church of the 'Word,' and as the witness of that Word, to be a servant of the Word is the special vocation entrusted to it. Of whichever side of this witness we think, it is certainly of immense importance. Preaching ought to be suited to the most varied needs, and the one unchangeable Word rightly 'divided.' To men of our day, in the whirlpool of work and of pleasure, in the confusions of various cosmic philosophies, the eternal truth needs to be brought home. Pastoral care needs an adaptability, a deep personal sympathy with others, and to this end a depth of culture such as no other vocation demands. It is indeed an immense responsibility by reason of its contents to bear witness of the Word of God. And yet it is not beyond our power on account of its contents, seeing that the Word itself is the power of powers; and of the bearer of its message no more is demanded than of other believers; no surpassing religious endowment or religious experience; but rather all comes to him as to all others when he only acts as a faithful householder; faithful to his particular earthly vocation, in the use of all the special means of his training. Therefore this vocation is not with all its difficulty merely a work that may 'still' be called 'a good work' (1 Tim. iii. 1)—that 'still' is a word of unfaith; as if there could ever be a time, however late, when it is no longer requisite—but must ever be so regarded. And further, each Church ought to feel that it is a duty to bring forward the right instruments for this ecclesiastical vocation, not by external

inducements but by a living sympathy; taken from all classes because it is a ministry to all classes; with all gifts, because for this task none is too great or too small. And if there is a failure in the needed supply for this service, the Church must ask itself the question, whether its attitude is the right one and whether it presents sufficient attractive power. In such examination what is external is not to be regarded as unimportant. There may be too much 'serving of tables' required from the minister of the Word. Although the addition of earthly affairs is a wholesome one and indispensable clearly enough as a share in the service of love, yet time and energy for self-recollection must not be wanting. But even evils like this, or even the modest situation in life, so far as property and honour are concerned, do not sufficiently explain the fact that the service of the Church is not one eagerly desired. It would be wrong to ignore the deepest reason, not to speak openly of the widespread although not always outspoken indifference to the Church, and to the Gospel of which the Church is, in weakness, the minister. A reason and a pretext for this indifference is a doubt of the truth of the Gospel, often increased by the bad impression that the Church imposes on her servants all the more stringent orthodoxy the less she can reckon on free agreement. Consequently it is one of the most important tasks of the Church to remove this mistrust and to strengthen confidence in the truth of her message, *i.e.* the truth of the Gospel to which she is a witness; and to do this in the whole circle of its influence, especially in the case of the young who devote themselves to the special service of the Church. The way to strengthen this confidence can be no other than by the way of freedom. Certainly the Church ought to devise and use all means for making all its theological candidates fit for the various practical parts of the clerical office. But that innermost, deepest personal conviction of the truth of the Gospel only the Gospel itself is able to produce when amid the freest battle of minds it proves its own power as the truth. Therefore all attempts to limit the freedom of science, or, since this is impossible, to inhibit the freedom of science to the future servants of the Church, have the contrary effect to that which



well-meaning anxiety desires. They repel the honest. It cannot be otherwise. Only a society which calls men to freedom can win them for its service. This is true in a unique degree of the region of the highest truth and the highest freedom. Therefore those churches are not the least blessed which do not regulate the admission into their service according to the letter of a single statutory paragraph, but can take them in the faith that this entrance to the office is a matter of a direct agreement between the servant and the Lord of all. Those taken in trust, yea, in 'hope against hope,' have not infrequently become the most faithful servants. On this point especially each legally organised Evangelical Church ought to be mindful that its whole legal existence is only a means for the advancement of the Church in which we believe, and through it for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God (p. 408). Consequently the variety of theological tendencies in its midst ought not to be destroyed, and we should not even desire their removal. Not only does history demand them; this conviction follows from the nature of our faith. The justification and benefit of the conservative tendency (the expression 'positive' we ought to gradually drop, because it is misleading) is clear enough. But who can deny to the 'broad' tendency the merit of keeping alive problems of importance, and in this way not only preserving those who stand aloof from altogether breaking off from the Church, and newly attaching them, but also it is essential to the welfare of the Church, which, as the handmaid of the Gospel, cannot be without these problems, because the Gospel as a spiritual and ethical religion cannot be without them. This judgment is of course a judgment of faith, but what is the Church without faith? And it will in the consideration of these problems reach by its struggles the right level of faith all the sooner, the more personal faith its members have.

#### *Missions.*

A token, consequence, and ground of such personal faith is the grateful recognition of missionary work. Among the special notes of the modern Church, this too is one of its special consolations. A missionary Church is a living Church. But this subject of present-day importance may not be treated here. Rather we

will only just call to mind that among the activities of the Church the spread of the Gospel cannot fail, in whatever form it may be carried on, whether by individuals or societies, or by the organised Church itself. So this reminder in its particular content as to the needs of the Church of to-day may bring us to a conclusion of this work on Christian ethics which links it to the commencement. From the farthest distance it returns again to that which is nearest and innermost.

Doubt infecting everything makes itself felt even against missionary work. Christianity, it is said, after having done educational service to the higher civilisation of Europe, has now been superseded as a religion. This obsolete Christianity has been carried by noble but fanatical religious natures to distant lands. According to the opinion of the missionaries themselves, it is in order to find a new home in other lands, as the old home has ungratefully rejected it; but in truth, as the opponents assert, it is in order to minister to the progress of civilisation, and finally by this means to render itself no longer indispensable. Therefore that which to Christian faith appears to be the dawn of a new era seems to the cool observer merely the last gleam of a belated inspiration. The facts of missionary history, and certainly those which have been part of our experience, do not show agreement with this explanation. Missionary work addresses itself to the deepest moral needs with success, *i.e.* to the same moral values the miscalculation of which plainly enough inspired the enmity which, in a way few expected, broke out against missions when they were antagonistic to utilitarian interests (China in 1900 and German S.W. Africa in 1905). It is the character of genuine Christian missions not to cry 'Halt!' in the presence of selfishness. What constrains the messengers of the Gospel? They have found in Christ redemption for moral need, as in the case of that greatest of missionaries the two things coincided, becoming a Christian and becoming an apostle (Gal. i. 14 ff.). Freed from the discord (spoken of in Rom. vii. 7 ff.), the Apostle recognised that he was a "debtor" to all who stand in need of this help (Rom. i. 14). But this is only one special case of an experience that is general.

The Gospel of Christ is for all who "hunger after righteousness" (St Matt. v. 1). It is the final and deepest difference among men, whether they discern or not the majesty of the Good. Whether they, however warm their admiration of the beautiful may be, still more warmly struggle after truth, and in this struggle grow certain that one truth is for them decisive, the truth that is above them. Whether they recognise that they ought to be good, and whether they now desire to be good. But what is good? How can an evil will become good? Jesus Christ it is who meets him who desires "that which alone is good in heaven and on earth, the good will," for He alone is the type and pledge of the one good will in heaven by the fact that He is 'the good will' incarnated on earth. And He produces the confidence that this good will is a gracious one for all who are not good but desire to be so. This faith is the incentive and motive power of the new life for individuals, for the transformation of all forms of society. It begins in time, but everywhere points to its perfection in eternity, for it is fellowship with eternal divine love. And so the Christian life, as it is produced by Christian belief, is the one great apology for the Christian faith (St John vii. 17). And precisely for this reason the concluding thought of ethics is essentially the same as the concluding idea of dogmatics.

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